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HISTORY

OF

FRENCH LITERATURE

HISTORY

OF

FRENCH LITERATURE

BY

HENRI VAN LAUN

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE RENAISSANCE

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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TO

M. PAUL LACROIX

(LE BIBLIOPHILE JACOB),

CONSERVATEUR À LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE L'ARSENAL, PARIS,

THIS HISTORY OF

FRENCH LITERATURE

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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INTRODUCTION.

What the history of a literature ought to be.

THE history of a literature is the history of a people ; if not this, it is worthless. To know merely what books have been written, and who wrote them, is to know a number of dry facts which may encumber the mind, but cannot inform it. To know what our predecessors and our contemporaries have written and thought, to throw ourselves into the mood of an author, assimilate his work, comprehend and develope his meaning, to make a literary production our own, so as to have the power of reproducing it at our pleasure, without at the same time being familiar with the circumstances under which it was first conceived, and the annals of the age in which it saw the light,—this is impossible. A book, in fact, is a part of its author, as he is a part of his generation ; and a serviceable knowledge of the one without the other is just as much beyond our reach as it would be to understand a mathematical formula apart from the axioms and definitions upon which it is based. We might as well say that a plant is classified by a description of its colour, form, and texture, as to boast that we had recorded the literature of a nation before connecting it with, and showing its origin from, and dependence upon, that nation's history.

And if a knowledge of history is necessary to a knowledge of literature, it is, as a natural consequence, and still more unquestionably, an assistance thereto. Just as in everyday life we perceive the full meaning of what is said to us when we are familiar with the person who speaks, interpreting in a moment the gestures of his face and body, aided by the

inflections of his voice, recognising the turns of expression and the idioms which he employs, so in the perusal of a book we are assisted by our acquaintance with the author, having been previously assisted, in forming that acquaintance, by a knowledge of the times which have developed him. How much weaker, for instance, would be the hold which *In Memoriam* has gained upon us, how much of its spirit and of its beauty would have been lost upon us, if we did not independently know what kind of a man the poet Tennyson is—his sensitive, retiring disposition, his abstraction, absorption, repulsion from vulgar and commonplace manifestations of feeling; or if we did not know the circumstances of his connection with Arthur Henry Hallam, the ways and customs of that Cambridge university life to which such frequent reference is made, the tone of the intercourse habitual to young Englishmen in the nineteenth century; or, again, if we were unacquainted with the accustomed manners and grooves of thought in English society, with the aspirations, the phases of science and of faith, the material condition of the country—nay, even with its configuration, its climate, the varied aspects which it has assumed under the hand of God and of man.

This latter thought leads us to a consideration which has more to do with geography than with history; or at least with geography as one description and subdivision of history. But we suppose that it is altogether unnecessary to dwell upon the importance of connecting every author and every literary production with the country in which he or it has been produced. To read the work of a German as we should read the work of an Italian, ignoring the features in each which are attributable to the sky beneath which they were born, and the scenery amidst which their ideas have taken shape, would be to read with closed eyes, and a mind wilfully insensible to one of the greatest allurements of literature.

And this is true not only of works which confessedly depend for their interest upon descriptions of external nature, or in which the conditions of climate and the impressions of physical surroundings are constantly being drawn upon for the purpose of illustration, but also of those more subtle and less manifest phases of the human intellect and imagination, which reveal themselves in manner and in mannerism, in various degrees of sprightliness and of sobriety, in richness or in poverty of thought, but which are none the less a result of the modifying influences of nature.

Necessity of studying the literature of a country.

Now, whilst the literature of a country, and the literary productions of an individual writer, cannot be thoroughly studied and mastered apart from the history of the race and of the epoch, it is very necessary to realise the fact that such a literature, or such a literary production, is, when once created, itself an active organism, having a distinct and independent energy of its own, whereby it forthwith begins to react upon its creators, and to assist in the development of the race and of the epoch from which it sprang. The attributes of the creator are shaped and moulded by the creature; the poem modifies the poet; the history of a people nourishes and educates the people, reproducing itself, as we say, through successive generations with all the added philosophy of experience. Thus, if Guyot de Provins, Marot, Villon, are the genuine products of mediæval France, offshoots of the old Gallic stock, nourished by neo-Latin ideas, brought to perfection amidst the lights and shadows of monkish corruptions, they in their turn became the progenitors of Scarron, Regnier, Béranger, amongst the factors of whose riper and richer minds those earlier satirists must not be neglected. It is not simply that a literary product is, from the moment of its creation, added to the causes of its own existence, but it includes and extends them.

The *esprit gaulois* is as potent to-day as it was in the

tenth century ; but whereas it was in Guyot's day a popular sentiment, fostered by the rough intercourse of everyday life, it is in our own age more characteristically a literary inheritance, transmitted from mind to mind by the mediation of poetry and fiction, and refined by this process in its coarser and more offensive features. The *narquois* of yesterday becomes the *moqueur* of to-day ; just as the wild Bretons of the sixth century, the ruthless Normans of the eleventh century, and the *Jacques* of a later date, have been moulded into the political opposition party and the theoretical communists of the times in which we live. The process is much the same in either case ; and the literary annals of the country will furnish its explanation.

What the literature of a country is.

The central idea which we would gladly assume to be impressed upon the mind of the student and of the general reader is this—that the literature of a country is, in a genuine and very important sense, the history of that country, and that it is, at all events, quite as much as the chronological annals of wars and dynasties, of politics and sociological facts, the sum and product of a national energy. History is in fact capable of many subdivisions. We might write the political, social, economical, religious, intellectual history of a country ; but none of them would be complete, even for its own special purposes, without the combination of all. And thus to cut off the intellectual records from the rest, and to call that residuum *history*, as though it could be and was naturally distinct from literature, is a misleading and inconvenient custom, which has but little to be said in its favour. For children, and students of a riper age, it is altogether mischievous ; whilst it is difficult to conceive the circumstances under which a reader could be benefited or assisted by the exclusion of literary annals from the history of any country. Of course it may be both expedient and interesting to make closer acquaintance with some special branch of history, touching more or

less lightly on all the rest. Such, indeed, is our present attitude towards the literary history of France; and the reason for this lies partly in the very defect of previous historical works to which reference has just been made. The literature of France, strange as the fact may appear, has been neglected in England until within the last few years, and it is necessary, therefore, that it should be treated with something more of exclusiveness than if the case had been otherwise.

But, at the same time, no history of literature worthy of the name can afford to pass by in silence the dynastic changes, the national and civil wars, the growth of the constitution, the progress of law, the gradual conquest of personal freedom, the steady amelioration of social habits and institutions, amidst which its own triumphs have been gained, its own monuments erected; to whose formation it largely contributed, after having been itself the outcome and the issue of coincident, not to say identical, causes. What account of French literature would be complete without some reference to the Fronde and to Louis XIV.; without a record of Hugh Capet's struggles against his powerful rivals, or of the quarrel between Pope Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair; without a mention of the persecution of the Huguenots? And again, the leading facts of sociology are indispensable to any serviceable literary history, the progress of civilisation in its thousand forms, the advancement of art, science, commerce, the development of the ideas of self-government, equity, subordination of ranks, colonisation, and the like, the interdependence of material prosperity and mental culture, the refinements of satire and the vagaries of popular caricature, the history of manners and conventions, of courtly dress and national costumes, of sumptuary laws, and no less imperative fashions—all these in their several relations have an important bearing upon the evolution, as upon the exegesis of a literature, and cannot be overlooked

without the infliction of a distinct and irremediable wrong.

For, let us repeat, the literature is the product of the man, and the man is the product of such surroundings as these. The man is the social unit; neither he nor his works can be understood unless we understand the social aggregate of which he is a unit. Race, climate, the influences of nature, may have done much to give the original bent to his mind; but when we have mastered all these, we know but an infinitesimal part of what we need to know. Virgil is not Bavius, Dryden is not Shadwell, Molière is not Boursault. They have been subjected to the same influences of race, and climate, and epoch, and general surroundings, and yet in the end stand at the very antipodes of thought. We must pierce still deeper into the history of their age; we must discover how it is that the one is a poet whilst the other lacks the divine afflatus. Innate genius cannot be made to account for the whole of this measureless difference; and it is the work of the biographer and the critic to show how much of it is attributable to the contact of the two men's souls with the circumstances of their day and generation.

Opinions of M. Taine.

"This much we can say with confidence," writes an eminent literary Frenchman,[1] "that the unknown creations towards which the current of the centuries conducts us will be raised up and regulated altogether by the three primordial forces of race, epoch, and surroundings; that if these forces could be measured and computed, one might deduce from them, as from a formula, the specialities of future civilisation, and that if, in spite of the evident crudeness of our notations, and the fundamental inexactness of our measures, we try now to form some idea of our general destiny, it is upon an examination of these forces that we must ground our prophecy. For, in enumerating them, we traverse the complete circle of

[1] H. A. Taine, *History of English Literature.* Introduction, § 5.

the agencies; and when we have considered race, circumstances, and epochs, which are the internal mainsprings, the external pressure, and the acquired momentum, we have exhausted not only the whole of the actual causes, but also the whole of the possible causes of motion."

True, in the sense of a truism, and true, if by the possibility of divination we simply mean that we could predict the future as soon as we knew the future; but, in any less general sense, M. Taine's opinion must not lead us into holding too lightly the difficulty of comprehending an author and his works. The passage which we have quoted contains the pith and substance of the distinguished critic's method, and if we follow it too blindly as the formula on which our critical system is to be based, it may possibly betray us into a rather superficial and incomplete estimate of men and things. Of course, in naming the word "circumstance," we include all and everything which can possibly affect the mind; and equally of course, this all and everything is what we can never hope to know, even of a contemporary writer, even of ourselves. Therefore the efforts which we make to become acquainted with the mainsprings and tributary streams of human thought and action will be successful only in the degree in which they are complete, assiduous, and far-reaching, taking nothing for granted, and nothing for insignificant. M. Taine has done for English literature what no Englishman has done, and he has made contributions to the general history of literature such as hardly any other historian had previously made; but in two important aspects — and I state this with all due deference and diffidence — he appears to have fallen short of the standard which he has adopted. He has valued too cheaply the paramount influence which the political — perhaps also the social — history of a generation exerts upon an author and his works; and he has passed too lightly over the immeasurable reflex influ-

ence which literary productions have upon political and social history.

Influence of literature upon history.

These influences are not only vast and mutual; they to a large extent balance and compensate each other. It is an eternal process in which humanity works out its own development, and progresses according to its own inherent laws. As the physical race is perpetuated by the birth of successive generations—the present springing from the loins of the past, and becoming pregnant with the promise of the future—so the growth of the intellect proceeds by the constant reproduction of vital and vitalising germs. A book is the offspring of the aggregate intellect of humanity, which, issuing mature from its parent mind, becomes thenceforth itself a fertilising agent, and has its part in all future generations. It gives back to the world of thought that which it took therefrom; appropriating, in so far as it is of any computable value, new ideas and the combinations of old ideas, and restoring them to humanity impregnated with life. It is thus that facts, and the history of facts, are perpetually being wedded to thought; thus that, from their prolific union, a new generation of facts and thoughts is added to the grand total of human knowledge.[1]

Influences which produce a writer.

Of the influences which combine to produce the writer, that of race is fundamental and preliminary. In France it is as strong and as marked as in any other country. The *esprit gaulois*—for perhaps the common term is correctly applied to the leading and predominant characteristics of the French genius—is sharply defined and easily recognised. Its prominent feature is satire—the tendency to catch in the first instance, quickly, and clearly, and comprehensively, the incongruous elements of a composite fact, and to receive them,

[1] "All the past of time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder peals,
Wherever thought hath wedded fact."
Tennyson.

not as an Englishman might, with a broad grin, but with a gay mocking smile which hides the shock of offended taste under a show of indifference. The show becomes a habit, and it is presently a real indifference which the Frenchman feels as to the conformity of his experience with his natural ideas on the fitness of things. These natural ideas the Gaul possessed in the first instance; and they were strengthened and enlarged, in the very dawn of his literature, by his eager adoption of Latin refinement. The satire is not very cruel; it is, as a late commentator has expressed it, "malice wrapped in bonhommie;" its accompanying shrug of the shoulders disarms resentment, as if the speaker added to his quip some such words as these: "Take my observation for what it may be worth. I give it under reserve; there may be an incongruity in the very words I utter. We cannot escape the common lot; there is incongruity in everything." We cannot be wrong in adopting the description of *gaulois* for this spirit; for though the Gauls, pure and simple, have left no literature behind them, we know that they were the substratum of the composite French, and though Iberians, Romans, Franks, Goths, Normans, have all contributed their elements to the race as it now exists, Gallic blood still runs, perhaps the most copiously, in their veins. Rabelais displayed this mocking characteristic as fully as any of his fellow-countrymen; and, indeed, he typified it in its hardest and sternest aspect; for he hated the corrupt monks, and rebelled against the tyranny and hollowness of a debased religious denomination. That rebellion was another typical feature, which enters largely into the character of Frenchmen. They may have inherited it specially from the Franks and Burgundians; in any case they have been possessed, from an early period of their history, with the passion for social freedom, for the social equality of man. Other characteristics they have, which it would be vain to try and trace to their

source;—irreverent, sceptical, rash in theory, fiery and impatient rather than persistent in action; easily susceptible of emotion; overflowing with animal spirits, self-indulgent, not incapable of, but disinclined to, long endurance, triumphing rather by fitful enthusiasm than by painful adherence to duty, restraint, and obedience. Their reasoning faculties are strong; they are quick-witted, logical, philosophical; but, with little perseverance, they are liable to inaccuracy, and make comparatively small use of experience. With such virtues and such failings, they have reaped the most splendid triumphs and have suffered the most provoking defeats. Alternately in the van and in the rear of humanity, they have for their consolation the fact that the brilliancy of their victories outlives the shame of their repulses; and they have earned the praise which is their proudest boast,—that of being the cynosure of Europe.

Political influences on literature.

The political influences which act in the development and modification of literature are many and potent; and these, unlike the influence of race, differ more or less in every age. Their effect may, as a rule, be traced with the greatest facility; and the writers on whom they have left no marked impressions are few indeed. Perhaps the most powerful influence of all is that exerted by the form of government, including herein the effects of good or bad government, which result in material prosperity or social unhappiness. Frenchmen have, as already implied, been ever peculiarly sensitive before the manifestation of injustice from their rulers; and unjust rule in France has produced greater popular misery than in any other country in Europe. As a consequence, we find their literature studded over with the traces of this external suffering, and with the marks of a spirit of fiery impatience and revolt. Not to dwell, in this connection, upon the few relics of Celtic poetry, or upon the evidences of sturdy popular rebellion contained in the *Chansons de Geste*, we may instance

the pamphlets of the Ligue, the lofty indignation of D'Aubigné, the sad revelations of the period of the Fronde, the stern denunciations of Rousseau and Mirabeau, the terribly scathing verses of Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, and Barbier, and the reproaches of a score of recent authors whom it is superfluous to name, because the sorrows which inspired their words have hardly passed away from contemporary history. With respect to ideal forms of government, France has instinctively, and with a remarkable degree of constancy, aimed at and advanced towards a condition of self-dominion. It is necessary to be very careful upon this point, for there is much that is conflicting in the history of the country, and many circumstances which might plausibly mislead us. In the fundamental Gallic race it is not probable that the chiefs —and far less that the short-lived dynasties of chiefs—possessed any great despotic strength. We cannot place much reliance on the mention by Zosimus[1] of the Republic of Armorica, though it is probable enough that a virtual confederation of cities did exist in the north-west corner of France at the beginning of the fifth century, for purposes of mutual aid and defence against the Alani, Goths, Huns, and Vandals, who poured across the Rhine when the Roman organisation was no longer strong enough to resist them. But the indomitable assertion of the spirit of independence did no doubt characterise the Gallic race, and had made itself felt in the *bagaudes*,[2] or peasant-risings, which were for a long series of years a thorn in the side of Roman occupation. It is a fair question, moreover, whether the *esprit gaulois*, the tendencies whereof have already been glanced at, was not specially unfavourable to the maintenance of those habits of subordination and obedience which are so necessary to the stability of monarchical institutions. The Latin race, again, had reached

[1] Zosimus, Ιστορία νέα, vi. 5.

[2] Celtic *bagad*, a troop or band. There was such a rising in A.D. 270.

the acme of its happiness and glory under a republic; and its posterity in the south-west of Europe has displayed a constant leaning towards democratic government, in the best sense of the word democracy. The very idea of Cæsarism has been defined, by some of its legitimate exponents, as an "imperial democracy;" and we are justified in referring to the present temper of the French nation in support of the view that if not a majority, at least a large number of Frenchmen are inalienably attached to a democratic form of government, whether the external determination of that form be allowed to pass under the name of Cæsarism or Republicanism. In any case the tone of French literature has been largely affected, in earlier times by the perpetual struggle for popular independence, and in more recent times by the direct rivalry between the rule of the people and the rule of monarchs. The annihilation of the aristocracy at the close of the last century was amongst the results of this struggle and this rivalry, and, as one of the most deeply impressed marks of the Revolution, it has stamped itself indelibly upon the literary monuments of the age.[1]

Religious influences on literature.

The religious influence is again an important factor in French literature. France has prided herself from the earliest times upon being the patroness of Christianity—even when she has preferred to call her monarch the "eldest son of the Church." This arrogance does not, of course, extend to the individual champions of the Gospel, who have been as modest in their assumptions as they have been distinguished for their ability and noted for their success.

Ampère has concisely described the contrast thus introduced into French literature.[2] "On the part of the orators and the wits, we have care and cunning of expression; on the

[1] It is chiefly in the newspapers of that period that this impress is to be found.

[2] *Histoire littéraire de la France avant le douzième siècle*, 3 vols., 1839-1840. Preface, p. xiii.

part of the first doctors and Christian writers, interest of matter, convictions, opinions, a cause for which they contend. Hence arises an energetic feature in Christian literature, and a certain hollowness in pagan literature; the latter is elegant and vain, the other more loose, but stronger. On the side of Christianity are all those champions of the faith, who fight for it, who repel the successive attacks of various heresies. Grand is the spectacle of the Church in its infancy, combating, not as it has too often combated, by persecution and violence, but by talent, by eloquence, by reason." Those early combatants have left their mark on French literature,—Irenæus of Lyons, Lactantius of Treves, Ambrosius of Milan, a native of Treves, Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus of Milan, Ausonius, Avitus of Vienne, Sidonius Apollinaris, Salvian, Fortunatus, Gregory of Tours, "the Herodotus of barbarism," Columban (an Irishman), St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, and born in Devonshire; Charlemagne himself, with his friend Alcuin; and, less eminent, more corrupt in argument, if not in manners, Hincmar of Rheims, and Scotus Erigena, "the last of the Platonists," who tried his best to wed Christianity with the ripest of ancient philosophies. All these were, by birth or adoption, Frenchmen; and though they wrote chiefly in Latin, they have given a tone and colour to the classical literature of France. Unorthodox Christianity has also left its deep impressions, thanks to Pelagius, Celestius, Cassianus, Vincent of Lérins, Hilarius of Arles, who reaped their triumph particularly in Southern Gaul; nor was the independent spirit which they introduced into French theology ever subsequently abandoned, even by such confessors as Bossuet and Bourdaloue, whilst its influence on such minds as that of Pascal, and through them on the modern Christian literature of France, can hardly be overrated. It is with the religious influence as with all other incidental influences; it has acted upon literature by superposition over the fundamental influence

of race, and, consequently, through the characteristics and varied tendencies of race. The habit of satire, for instance, the love of equality, the strain for independence, and the like, have modified theology in France, have secularised religion, and finally, to a large extent, shaken off or depreciated religious forms and fetters; until at last the negation of religion has become a prominent feature on the face of French literature.

Influence of philosophy on literature.

So, too, of philosophical influences, into which we shall not here pursue the thread of our suggestions, lest we be carried too nearly over the ground already traversed. In philosophy, even more than in religion, we shall find certain race-characteristics of the French exerting a very powerful sway over the writers of their literature. A quick-witted perception of cause and effect, combined with an extreme fertility of the logical faculty, has served to produce not only great triumphs in the field of mental exertion, but also great originality, or even eccentricity, in the conception of novel philosophical systems. Witness Descartes on the one hand, Auguste Comte on the other. This excess of the logical capacity is worthy of special attention, for it explains much in the French intellect which would otherwise appear fortuitous. It is in part, no doubt, the effect of training and acquired habits of thought; but it is no less certainly a race-characteristic. Compare it with the *finesse* of expression and the rhetorical gift—with the sprightliness of mood and the individuality of criticism—with the independence of manner and the adroitness of *repartie* for which the nation is distinguished, and you will be ready to admit that this logical skill and patience is a characteristic—a composite one, it may be, but still a characteristic of the fundamental tendency of the race. Coupled with the power of passing rapidly to an inference or conclusion, it has enabled the Frenchman to reap brilliant triumphs of oratory and argument, and has made him, in conversation more than in written literature, the most elegant and polished of mankind.

These few considerations may have sufficed to show how largely the literature of France—how largely the literature of every country—has been influenced by external circumstances; near or remote; political, social, or historical. No less striking is the effect which the literary man produces upon the circumstances in which he moves, upon the institutions and the history of his age. Think, for example, of the "Young Germany," created by Schiller, Goethe, and Lessing; of the "Young Italy" created, in two senses, by Mazzini on the one hand, by Cesare Balbo, d'Azeglio and Gioberti on the other; of the "Young England" created by Byron and nourished by Carlyle. Think of the upheaval of religious thought and life effected in England by John Henry Newman, the elder Froude, and their Oxford contemporaries; of the enthusiasm for humanity stimulated in France by Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset. Instances crowd upon the brain as we write; but there can be no necessity to refer to the thousand schools of thought which have been gathered round the persons of bold thinkers and eloquent exponents of thought in almost every age and country, for poor humanity must always have some one to admire and to follow, or something to criticise. If, in this study of French literature, we were to neglect this active and productive side of literary creators, and fail to gauge the influences of each, as well as the influences upon each, we should forfeit all claims to the satisfaction which conscientious labour can alone afford.

Influence of the literary man upon his times.

If any one should ask why this history of French Literature is undertaken, the reason is a simple one, namely, that no such history, either in extent or in scope, exists in the English language. To a certain point Mr. Hallam, in his *Literature of the Middle Ages*, has dealt philosophically with a subject which he felt and demonstrated to be full of varied interest; but his design precluded him from drawing a complete picture. Demogeot's valuable work has been trans-

Why this history has been written.

lated into English, at all events in a condensed form ; but he wrote professedly for the mere student, thus sacrificing general discussions and conclusions. Several other handbooks of French literature, such as Gérusez, Gidel, Baron, Albert, Aubertin, Baret, are practically unknown to the English reader, and it may safely be said that no Englishman has yet attempted to do for French literature what the Germans have done for it, and what both Frenchmen and Germans have done for English literature. And the fact appears all the more strange when we consider how much has been lost by the omission.

For the intellectual history of France is certainly unique. It is the history of a race which has ever been in the van of modern European thought, which has conquered more by its mind than by its arms, which has conferred upon the world gifts whose value is not to be calculated by any material standard. It is the history of a nation to which the supremacy of the soul has always been as dear as the supremacy of the sword, and which has more than once asserted that supremacy at the very moment when its military and political influence have been most in dispute. We have to deal with a people essentially spirited and intellectual, whose spirit and intellect have been invariably the wonder and admiration, if not the model and mould, of contemporary human thought, and whose literary triumphs remain to this day amongst the most notable landmarks of universal literature. If we set on one side the master-minds of England, it is to France that we must look for the great lights of modern days, the great pioneers of modern thought, the great leaders of modern intelligence. From France have come the poets whose burning words inflamed the dull hearts of the middle ages, the dramatists who reared the classical stage of the seventeenth century, the mathematicians who opened up to our gaze the marvellous simplicities of astronomical truths, the logicians and metaphysicians who taught the solid mind to

revolve in the orbit of rational faith, the historians who first reduced the chaos of tradition to a science, and emulated, with hereditary genius, the simplicity and concision of Livy and Tacitus. To her, above all, we owe the orderly and logical discrimination of ideas, arrangement of thoughts, clearness and severity of expression, readiness of deduction and elegance of diction, without which a literature can appear at the best but a splendid heap of unknown and unclassified gems.

Literature in France from the beginning.

France is the land of *Chansons de Geste*, of romances culled from the rich fields of mediæval history, and legends bright with the glow of a triumphant Christianity. Her troubadours, her trouvères and *jongleurs*, filled Europe with their songs, and wrote the nursery rhymes of infant civilisations. Spain, Germany, England in particular, owe to her tales and *fabliaux* many of the most beautiful of their earliest poetic utterances. It was France who fertilised the barren cloisters, and reaped from them chronicles and memoirs which still serve as the basis of our modern history. From the French convents came also that religious philosophy which was the first mature offspring of Christian and pagan thought, and which handed down to all time the golden fruit of an Abelard and a Saint Bernard. In France quickened the first germ of religious reformation, nursed by the mocking, scathing, scarifying satire of Rabelais, stimulated by the cold, light, good-tempered banter of Montaigne. France was pre-eminently the cradle of the Renaissance; religion, language, and literature alike revived beneath her cherishing care. The end of the sixteenth and the whole of the seventeenth centuries are crowded with writers of indescribable freshness, vigour, and brilliancy—a brilliancy which has well-nigh eclipsed the sweeter and paler refulgence of Villon and the preceding trouvères. It was the age of the Pléiade and of the Ligue, of the Hôtel de Rambouillet and the Port-Royal, of the Satire Ménippée and of the Précieuses; of poets as varied as Ronsard and du Bartas,

of purists like Malherbe, of romancists like d'Urfé, of euphuists like Voiture. It was the age of historians like de Thou and d'Aubigné, of writers of memoirs like Sully and de La Noue, of theologians like François de Sales, of philosophers like Descartes and Pascal, of philologists and scholars like Joseph Scaliger and Casaubon. It was, once more, the age of human misery and of human glory, of the Fronde and of the *Grand Monarque*, the age of ultra-refinement and of the Academy, where the French language was toned down and purified till it lost much of its pristine energy and vigour, and became fit to be spoken by courtiers and whispered into the ears of high-born dames. And lastly, it was the age of the reviving drama, from Jodelle to Corneille, from Corneille and Racine to the one man who knew well how to bring out upon his canvas the lights and shadows of every-day life, the king of dramatists, the anatomist of humanity, Molière.

Age of Louis XIV.

The age of Louis XIV. embraces an Augustan literature of the greatest conceivable splendour, and even this has not been worthily treated in English. The seventy years' reign of this self-sufficient patron of learning and culture succeeded immediately upon the dark days of the Fronde; and in more than one sense he dispersed the ominous shadows which had already begun to creep up from beneath over the fair face of France. The king's motives were selfish, he wanted to be amused, and hence he became a constant friend to men of letters. His court was frequented by men and women to whom the refinements of literature were a boast, and even sometimes a passport. The theatre under Louis XIV. was at the acme of its high repute. The Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Italian comedians, the companies at the Marais and at the Palais Royal, divided the monarch's favours; but Louis, though selfish, was not without discrimination, and he must receive at least the patron's share of credit for several of Molière's inimitable comedies, which, but for him, might never have seen the

light.[1] Amongst the courtiers who were authors appear the Duke de la Rochefoucauld and the Count de Bussy-Rabutin, who paid for his sarcasms by a long exile; amongst the pulpit orators, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon. With these were Boileau, the "lawgiver of Parnassus," the pungent La Bruyère, the refined and literary ladies Mesdames de la Fayette, de Sévigné, and de Maintenon, as well as Racine, then at the height of his fame, the gentle Fénelon, far too liberal-minded for his age, the amiable La Fontaine, the judicious Duke de Saint-Simon; and again, exiles from their native country but still her own children, St. Evremond, Bayle, Le Clerc, Claude, Saurin, and their fellow refugees.

Literature in France during the eighteenth century.

Once more, in the dawn of another and perhaps a still greater renovation of intellect, we meet with a bright roll of names, amongst which the novelist Le Sage, the far-sighted pioneers of political and mental progress, Turgot, Montesquieu, Marmontel, the versatile and courageous Voltaire, the learned encyclopedists d'Alembert, Diderot, and Helvétius, the psychologists and naturalists Condillac and Buffon, the social reformers Rousseau, and de Saint Pierre, stand forth pre-eminent.

Literature in France from the Revolution to the present day

The revolutionary epoch in France—by which, of course, is meant the epoch wherein the ever-present though latent desire for human equality in the Gallic race finally broke all bounds, and entered upon that struggle which has succeeded, or must succeed, in establishing the central fixed idea of its genius—was an age of literary as well as of political and social ferment, and the strife issued in the emancipation of letters as of institutions and men. Amidst that chaos of conflict and destruction lived and wrote the eloquent Mirabeau, Maury, Sieyès, Desmoulins; authors who met the full brunt of the Terror, and succumbed to it, like M. A. de Chénier, Saint

[1] See the introductory notices to *Don Juan* and *Tartuffe* in my Translation of Molière's Dramatic Works, 1875-1876.

Just, Madame Roland; men who emerged from it bearing the manifest traces of that long agony, Volney, Necker, Joseph de Maistre. The struggle over, and the short period of natural exhaustion past, after the splendid disgrace of the first Empire, and when for once the intellect of France had perceived that, if she fell back from the van of thought and civilisation, England and Germany were more than able to assume her place, the best and most durable triumphs of the revolution began to be realised, not merely in political freedom, orderly self-government, commercial prosperity, but also in the fields of learning and art. From Madame de Stael, Chateaubriand, P. L. Courier, Benjamin Constant, we pass on through the brilliant age of Louis Philippe to the giants of modern history, the wizards of romance, the pundits of criticism, the novelists, dramatists, philosophers, who restored their country to something like its old supremacy, and ushered in the teeming mental activity of the present day.

Origin of the French nation.

Such is the literature with which we have to deal; an undertaking full of interest and responsibility, but which carries with it its own justification. And if we pass from the facts to the causes of those facts, we shall find that the intellectual history of France is the history of a nation which, though Gallic or Celtic in its origin, is a legitimate heir of the ancient Latin race—a race in which Englishmen themselves have an interest of relationship, and in whose transmitted genius we must necessarily feel a hearty sympathy wherever we meet with its traces. France represents in a special degree the development of the Latin civilisation, more fully, if not more directly, than Italy. She was the chosen, if not the natural home, of Roman culture and refinement during the later years of the Empire's decline, even before the transference of the sceptre from Italy to Byzantium had robbed the seat of the Cæsars of its principal allurements. As we shall see hereafter, the last of the Roman emperors set Gaul

in their affections higher than the city which had been the boast and glory of their ancestors, and Gaul herself returned the embrace of her conquerors with all the enthusiasm of fascination. Roman arts, Roman letters, Roman habits and fashions, became the touchstone of the simple Gauls, and of the still more impressionable Franks, who, in their turn, conquered and were absorbed by Gaul.

And yet again, if France has played the part of mistress to Europe, courted in succession by each strong race, yielding to them her beauty and her soul, now by compulsion, now by voluntary self-substitution; if she has triumphed over all by the glamour of her charms, and tyrannised over all in the fulness of her pride, she has also taken from each in turn the impression of their several excellencies, and has moulded her many-sided heart into a reflex of all who have had commerce with her. Rome was her first love, and stamped its characteristics upon her virgin soul; but after Rome came the Frank, the Goth, the Iberian, the Norman, the Englishman; and, loved of many, yet retaining her own individuality, she reflects back upon all her lovers with subtlest flattery their refined and ennobled lineaments. No wonder that Europe looks upon France as the spoiled beauty of the Caucasian family, admiring and loving her even though it may be constrained to be cruel in its love.

Reasons for studying French literature.

There is yet another and more prosaic reason why we should, in this age and generation, address ourselves to the study of French literature. The epoch of the revolution was not favourable to the student and the critic, and we have already seen that between the reigns of Louis XV. and Louis Philippe there occurred a period of comparative dearth, when the turmoil of political strife overclouded for a time the fields of moral and intellectual progress. It was natural that, under these circumstances, the records of French literature should fall into arrears, that men should lose sight of biographical

and incidental details which would otherwise have been more carefully preserved, that facts should be overlooked and documents laid aside. It had happened thus to a much greater degree both in France and England during the fifteenth century; for a protracted period of war is of necessity a period of more or less intellectual darkness. The end of the eighteenth century resembled in some respects the beginning and middle of the fifteenth; and it is in any case a fact that critics and historians of the First Empire and the Restoration could not at once lay their hands on all the materials necessary to complete the literary history of their predecessors. But during the past half-century many fresh materials have been brought to light, and many forgotten documents are now at our service which have never, in England at least, been categorically arranged for the purpose which they are calculated to serve. Examples of this advance in the value of our knowledge are hardly necessary, but we may instance the new light which has been thrown by recent researches upon the personal history of Molière, and the handful of papers which have served to cast a shadow on the character of Montaigne.

The man and the book.

From all that has been said, I trust the inference is clear, that the literature of a country is a reflex of that country's history. The history of human society, whether in its political or in its domestic aspects, is, more or less definitely, a succession of biographies and biographical details; and this is precisely what we discover at the base of all literary movements. The book is the man holding commerce with his fellows; the man is the exemplar and epitome of his day and generation. From the documents of a past age we can in some sense reconstruct the age, and he will prove himself the most faithful historian who most clearly realises this fact. The mere piecing together of documents, poems, chronicles, and State papers will not suffice for genuine history; we must perceive behind these the living and breathing men and

women. Moreover, no literature will be found to be more truly the reflex of a nation's history than that which it is our design to study, unless it be the literature of England.

French writers have written with their souls in their work, even when the soul was hollowest and its feelings least genuine. Whatever we may find of mannerism in French literature is but a proof that the words bear the impress of the man who wrote them, and mannerism is a characteristic of French literature. Few Frenchmen could be named whose style would not at once recur to us, with its own specialities of expression, its own excellencies or tricks of language. The reason is that the nation writes as it thinks, straight from the heart, or from the fancy, or from the mood of the hour; and from this straightforwardness it has arisen that its literature is, in a peculiar and remarkable degree, a reflection of its history.

The value of such a literature is manifest. It is lifted by virtue of its speciality above the mere lists of authors and their works, the tables of contents and *dramatis personæ*, the abstracts and excerpts which are often called upon to do service as a "history of literature." It becomes, in fact, rather a literature of history, or better, a history of men and things in their best aspects and from the worthiest point of view.

HISTORY OF FRENCH LITERATURE.

BOOK I.

ORIGIN OF THE FRENCH NATION.

CHAPTER I.

§ 1. THE CELTS AND THE IBERIANS.

THE Iberians were the vanguard of the invading races who overwhelmed and swept before them the oldest known inhabitants of Western Europe—the Celts. These latter, in pre-historic times (so far, at least, as France and Spain are concerned), had been driven back before the immigration of the eastern races; but they held their ground in the extreme west, and are to this day represented amongst the European family, by characteristics of race, manners, and even physiognomy. In France their descendants have their principal home in the north-western part of the promontory of Brittany; in Spain they may be recognised to the north-west of a line drawn from Bilbao to the mouth of the Guadalquivir. K. W. von Humboldt has shown, chiefly by considerations of geographical nomenclature, that on the eastern side of this line there remains hardly a single trace of the Celtic tongue; the primeval names of mountains, rivers, and other physical features of the earth's surface being germane to the present Basque language, which has few points in common with any

other existing tongue. And he concurs with other writers worthy of credit in identifying the ancient Iberians with the modern Basques.

The Iberians, at the dawn of their authentic history, occupied the southern part of Spain and France, from the line above mentioned as far east as the mouth of the Arno. No doubt the Aquitanians, whom Strabo[1] represents as differing in language and appearance from the rest of Gaul, belonged to this ancient race, the connection of which with the great Indo-European family is lost in obscurity. They were possibly themselves an indigenous European race, driven back upon the Celts by the invading tribes which so persistently trod upon their heels. A curious etymological coincidence[2] tends to confirm us in this supposition. In the Basque tongue we find the words *atzean*, signifying "behind," and *atzea*, signifying a "foreigner." The Iberian, we may suppose, had made common cause with the Celt, who was in like case with himself, whilst the ever-encroaching Goth and Frank, who pressed upon him in the rear, became generalised as "the people behind him."

It was not, however, in pre-historic times that Brittany, the old Armorica, became the asylum of the Celt. In the time of Julius Cæsar—that is, during the century preceding the Christian era—the Celts occupied that corner of Europe which we now call France, being protected upon the east by the natural boundary of the Alps and the Rhine. The Celtic race is divided into two branches; and of these the Cimbrian branch, or Cymris, were chiefly settled between the Loire and the Seine, in the north-west of the country; whilst the Gallic branch, the Gaels or Gauls, occupied the middle. The leading tribes of the Gallic race are described by Julius Cæsar

[1] The *Geography* of Strabo, ed. Hamilton and Falconer, i. lib. iv. § 1.

[2] K. W. von Humboldt, *Prüfung der Untersuchungen über die Urbewohner Hispaniens, vermittelst der Baskischen Sprache*, p. 129.

under the name of Arvernians, Aeduans, and Sequanians. It was with these that he came into closest contact; and, taking the name by which they were known amongst themselves, he applies it, in a Latinised form, to the whole country between the Ocean and the Rhine, and calls it *Gallia*. The Gallic league, as Cæsar found it constituted, comprised the whole middle region of Gaul, from the neighbourhood of Quercy (*Cadurci*) in the south to Clermont (*Gergovia*) in the north, and from Besançon (*Vesontio*) on the east to the basin of the lower Garonne. Into this league two powerful tribes on the south-east refused to enter; the Allobrogians, occupying the western slopes of the Alps, nearly corresponding with Savoy, and the Helvetians, peopling the modern Switzerland. On the north-east were the Belgians—themselves, probably, not the last of the Celtic race who crossed the lower Rhine. Their western boundary—still referring to the date of Julius Cæsar's invasion—ran from the coast a little to the west of Amiens, passed between Clermont and Beauvais (in the district of the Bellovaci), and so through Champagne to the source of the Marne. They formed no strong confederations, being kept, no doubt, in a state of ceaseless disturbance by continual irruptions across their eastern boundary. It was, in fact, not long after the commencement of the Christian era that the western banks of the Rhine, as far, at the farthest point, as the modern Sedan, had acquired the name of Upper and Lower Germany.

Such, in mere outline, was the subdivision of Gaul at the time of the Roman invasion. However, no account is taken of the ancient colonies on the Mediterranean, the offshoots of Greek, Roman, and other eastern civilisations; of which Marseilles and Narbonne were the most celebrated. Into the historical origin of the early inhabitants of France it would not serve our purpose to enter more deeply; but it will repay us to inquire into their personal and social characteristics.

The typical Gaul seems to have been of medium height, coming between the taller German and the shorter Roman; of fair complexion, with ruddy cheeks, blue eyes, and long light-coloured hair. He was spare of form; his head round, eyes large, nose and chin and forehead rounded off—"a face blunted like a well-worn river pebble;" beard and whiskers short, or entirely absent. The type is familiar, and may be met with in any hap-hazard assembly of Frenchmen; but it is still most abundant in Auvergne, in the Cevennes, and in Savoy. The Belgians were larger in the head, taller, with squarer foreheads, more pointed noses, more luxuriant beards. Such is still the description most applicable to the Frenchmen dwelling north of the Seine, and eastwards in the direction of Belgium; whilst in the south-west, between the Garonne and the Pyrenees, we find to this day a darker, smaller, more sombre, and more enduring race, cognate in appearance as in the blood with the Spaniards of the north.

The Gaul, again, was full of fire and dash; eager for the battle, but not patient under its hardships; full of spirit, both in war and in peace—in the war of words as well as of arms. The Gallic race, says Cato, is passionately devoted to these two things: fighting well, and speaking shrewdly. Italians have a byword which speaks of the *furia francese;* the Frenchman himself has another, when he boasts of his *esprit de finesse.* They are the two principal key-notes of the French character. With all their dash—*élan* is their apt modern word—they have never been permanently strong in the field; and this because they were lacking in two essentials—enduring and cunning. Dion Cassius[1] accuses them of timidity. Cæsar[2] puts it that "as the temper of the Gauls is impetuous and ready to undertake wars, so their mind is weak and by no means resolute in enduring calamities." And

[1] Lib. xvii. c. 6.

[2] *De Bello Gallico,* lib. iii. c. 19.

again, Strabo[1] says: "The entire race . . . is warlike . . . but otherwise simple . . . thus they are easily vanquished by those who employ stratagem. For any one may exasperate them when, where, and under whatever pretext he pleases; he will always find them ready for danger, with nothing to support them except their violence and daring."

"The value of Frenchmen in battle has often been tested. When we see the Gauls hurling themselves upon the Romans with a blind fury, and the latter awaiting them unmoved, or, by a slight avoidance, letting the sword of the Gaul bury itself in the earth, and then unerringly smiting their enemy, disarmed by his own dash, we think inevitably of the Gaels and their claymores at Culloden, or of the French at Poitiers, at Crécy, at Agincourt, rushing upon the English archers, who, as Froissart says, sat coolly waiting for them, and then rose all together, with thorough unanimity and calmness, and crushed them as the Romans crushed the Gauls."

So writes Ampère, himself a Frenchman, whose accurate and candid estimate of the characteristics of his race it would be difficult to improve upon. The conservation of the old Gallic type is remarkable; but in tracing it down the current of successive ages it will be necessary for us to avoid the many false and conflicting judgments of historians, both ancient and modern, who have been misled, now by ignorance, now by favourable or unfavourable prejudice. The writer just quoted points out two notable inconsistencies in Latin historians, which may serve as examples of the danger arising from the incautious adoption of any single authority, however reputedly trustworthy. Cicero, in his Oration for Fonteius, stigmatises the Gauls as inimical to all religion. He spoke indeed as a special pleader, but he doubtlessly believed, in this instance, what he said; for this is not the only passage in which he levels the same shaft against the Gauls. Cæsar,

[1] L., lib. iv. § 2.

on the other hand, who had had better opportunities of obtaining a knowledge of the country than his eloquent contemporary, says: "The nation of all the Gauls is extremely devoted to superstitious rites."[1] Again, Strabo[2] says that the Gauls were wont to combine in "crowds and vast numbers" for the accomplishment of their designs. Assuming this, and contrasting the acknowledged fondness of the Iberians for isolated fighting—the guerilla warfare of modern Spain—we might suppose ourselves to have arrived at the source of the respective characteristics of the two races as we now know them. But it would be necessary to correct this view by the light of Cæsar's explicit statement, that, not only in the towns, but in every district, almost in every house, there were divisions between opposing parties of men.[3]

The Gauls were rather brave than courageous; brave, that is, in the sense of being fond of display and of defiance. They braved their enemies with their dashing onslaught and their whirling broadsword; they braved their friends with gay and splendid garments, with necklaces and bracelets of gold, with the *virgatis sagulis*[4] which answered to the tartans of the Scottish Gaels. The figure of a Gallic chieftain is before us as we write, enlarged by Hucher from ancient coins. His tunic (Lat. *sagum*, Fr. *saie*) falls just below the thighs. It is gathered in at the waist by a cord, ending in two tassels, which were evidently of elaborate make, and apparently ornamented, above the knots, with rings of bronze or gold. Lappets fall over the shoulders from behind, and these have a deep edging, doubtless of some richer and gayer material. The helmet is adorned by six rays, three on each side, which, if they were likewise composed of metal, would serve to protect the neck and shoulders from the blows of an enemy's sword. On the throat is a boss of gold or bronze, which must have

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi. c. 16.
[2] I., lib. iv. c. 2.
[3] *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi. c. 2-10.
[4] Ennius, lib. viii. v. 660.

been attached either to a necklet, or to the fastenings of the helmet. In his right hand the chief holds his javelin and ensign—the latter evidently a very elaborate ornament, representing the emblematic wild boar. The left hand rests upon a shield. Such was the gorgeous panoply with which the Gallic warrior went to battle; and his horse was as gaily caparisoned as himself.

Amongst the institutions of the ancient Gauls, we find, of course, those which are common to all races in their infancy; such as slavery, polytheism, contempt for women and children. If we were to confine ourselves to the accounts of Roman historians—which accounts are, in fact, almost all that we have to go by—we should be driven to conclude that the condition of the Gauls in these three respects was quite as bad as, if not worse than that of other uncivilised races. No doubt much that these historians tell us is true. The slave in Rome, according to Roman law, was "*non tam vilis quam nullus;*" and even before the Roman law was adopted in Gaul, the Gallic slave was perhaps equally insignificant. According to Cæsar,[1] he used to be immolated on the tomb of his master, that he might serve him in the other world. There were "but two classes worthy of note," the priest and the warrior; the residuum were slaves; either men of war, following their masters to the battle, and doing their behests in time of peace, or attached to the soil, and sharing in its good or evil fortunes. In religion the Gauls were Druidic; the Druids constituting the governing class, in whose hands were the legislation, the administration, the education, the divination, the general tutelage of the state. They were, moreover, the poets, the seers, the oracles, and interpreters of the mysterious; adding the sanction of superstition to the stern authority of the warrior-chiefs, and feared, in the frequent absence of the latter from home, perhaps still more than when they were

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi. c. 19.

present. It is true that the religion of Druidism was rather pantheistic than polytheistic; though in Southern Gaul, amongst the Iberians and the Greek and Roman colonists on the Mediterranean, the impure fetishism of Egypt and the refined idolatry of the Aryan race prevailed.

The condition of women and children in Europe during the ages to which we refer was such as to make us hesitate whether we ought to place the Indo-European races in the van of civilisation, or man himself above the brutes. Women were bought and sold, defined by law as disposable property, repudiated at will, hired out by their husbands for gold, prostituted on the very altar of the gods, held to labour like the most degraded of slaves, left to die in their old age, or killed to assuage the displeasure of their brutal owners. In Gaul the tillage of the ground was one of their special duties; whilst, as for the children, those that were sickly or crippled were rarely allowed to live. There was no sanctity in marriage, save by way of exception; no homage from the strong to the weak, save by way of appetisation to lust; no ease and luxury for women in the domestic life, save when a man of wealth set store by his wives and concubines, as amongst the most costly and ornamental of his possessions. In the ancient world there were many temples raised in honour of adultery and prostitution; not one to the purity of conjugal affection.[1] In brief, the liberty, faith, unselfish love, which are the three central and purifying instincts of modern life, were amongst the ancients all but empty names; or, more precisely, the names of hideous vices enthroned in virtue's place.

So much being admitted, it remains to be said that the worst part of this corruption came into Europe from the east, and into Gaul from Rome and Greece. The stream of refinement and mental cultivation flowed, no doubt, in the channel which brought the Pelasgians and Etruscans to the

[1] Lavallée, *Histoire des Français*, 19th edition, 1874, vol. i., p. 14.

Mediterranean shores; but the stream of moral civilisation flowed southwards in Europe, and had its source and tributaries in our own regions of the globe. The barbarians who hurled themselves in successive hordes upon the disciplined armies of Rome, and who ended by overwhelming the mistress of the world, were the real pioneers of human regeneration; and even in the darkest phases of their history they displayed the germs of their inherent power. It is not to the classical influence alone, though it may be to it in the main, that we must look for the dawn of learning in north-western Europe—for the brilliant effulgence of literary and social culture which we know by the name of the Renaissance, and for the full splendour of mental refinement in which it has been our happy lot to be born. It is, at most, the marriage of the North and the South to which we owe the fertility of modern thought; and in that marriage the South, with all her rich apparel and dowry of lettered grace, was the bride, whilst the virile intellect and reproductive energy of the North was necessary to bring to birth the stupendous issue of their union. The fact cannot be too strongly insisted upon. It would indeed be absurd to grudge the credit which has been assigned to Greece and Rome for their share in the intellectual fertilisation of the modern world;[1] but undoubtedly the panegyric bestowed upon them has frequently been excessive, and at times immoderate. The bright dawn of Gallic literature, the galaxy wherein moved the morning stars of French song, owed but little of its brightness to classical ideas; and the same is true of the literary infancy of the rest

[1] "Dans ces trois peuples, les Grecs, les Romains, les Hébreux, était l'avenir de l'humanité."—Lavallée, *Histoire des Français*, vol. i. p. 18. It is impossible not to dissent, *toto orbe*, from this judgment of a shrewd and generally impartial writer, who has in this instance done too little justice to his own Gallic ancestors. As for the influence of the Hebrews on modern thought, we shall not be held to undervalue it when we have occasion to speak of the effect of Christian literature on the literature of France.

of northern Europe. Nor had Greek or Latin learning or imagination—notwithstanding what is generally thought to be the case—made any remarkable impression upon such men as Villon, Marot, and Rabelais, without whom, it is hardly too much to say, French literature is not.

Let us revert to the social characteristics which, as we have admitted, and particularly in respect of three distinct features, leave their blot upon the early history of Gallic society. It is true that the institution of slavery took strong root in Gaul, especially after the Roman infusion. And yet nothing is more certain than that the struggle for equality was always one of the dominant ideas of the Gallic race, which has distinguished it from the very first to the very last page of its history. The Teutonic nations have preferred liberty to equality, and the highest and lowest ranks have, times without number, united to shed their blood in the conquest of political freedom. The Gauls and their descendants, on the other hand, have often consented without a murmur to a condition of political servitude, engrossed in the paramount desire to attain a greater degree of equality between rich and poor. Here was, at all events, a notable redeeming feature, which elevated them, even in their savage days, above the average level of savages. It was manifested in Cæsar's time by a remarkable institution, according to which the soil of the country was redistributed every year, in order, as Cæsar says, that "the common people might be in a contented state of mind when each sees his own means placed on an equality with those of the most powerful."[1] In religion, again, the Gauls could compare favourably with the Aryan and Egyptian races, who had attained a certain degree of civilisation before them. Barbarous as were some of the rites of Druidism, the Druids taught men to worship one God, with a worship which derived its cruelty from the prevailing tone of a warlike age, but

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi. c. 22.

which was not a mere hollow idolatry. Such considerations as these justify us in saying that, although the Teutonic invaders were superior to the Gauls, in their respect for liberty, in their method of worship, and in their care for women and children, the Gauls were in these respects little, if at all, behind the Greek and Latin invaders, from whom they learned such invaluable lessons of civilisation.

§ 2. Remains of Celtic Poetry.

There were, as has been observed, two distinct races in Gaul previous to the arrival of the Romans—the Iberians of the south-west, in the district known as Aquitaine, and the Celts of the north. These latter were described by Julius Cæsar as Celts and Gauls, between whom he distinguished a difference of speech. The "Celts" of the north-west, perhaps, belonged to the Cymric branch of the family, and were allied more closely than the Gauls with the Cymri of England, Wales, and Ireland. It is impossible in this age to discriminate, in any important sense, between the Gauls proper and the Armorican branch, and no noteworthy error will be incurred by adhering to the commonly-accepted term of "Gauls," in referring to the inhabitants of the whole northern and eastern country—that is, to the bulk of the nation which we now call French. Even as regards the language of the Celts, it would be difficult to trace, in the modern French tongue, many distinctions between the old Gallic and Cymric. M. Ampère has pointed to a few instances; and he reminds us that, as late as the fifth century, Sulpicius Severus, in his dialogues on the life of St. Martin, makes one of his interlocutors say:—"Speak to us in Celtic or in Gallic, so long as you speak to us of Martin;" which shows that the two forms noted by Julius Cæsar were still

extant. And St. Gregory, in the sixth century, employs the word "fol," *more gallico*, as he explains it.[1]

Beyond this time we find no evidence of a distinctly Celtic speech beyond the borders of Brittany; where it had been to some extent reinforced in the fourth century by a colony of Welsh, who settled there under the auspices of the usurper Maximus. After them Armorica was called *Petite-Bretagne*, Little Britain.[2] Here, to this day, the Cymric form of Celtic has endured with a certain kind of vitality; though not to such a remarkable degree as in Wales and in Ireland. Of a Celtic alphabet in Gaul there is no satisfactory trace; whilst Cæsar[3] informs us that the Gauls made use of Greek characters, a remnant, no doubt, of the Phœnician importations. To the Phœnicians, in fact, whose commercial relations with western Europe, and with Gaul in particular, date from a period at all events anterior to the sixth century before Christ, the country owed not merely its earliest models of Greek civilisation but also many of the characteristics of its religion—many of the distinctive features of Druidism itself. Human immolations had their origin, probably enough, in the instincts of human nature; but the osier-baskets filled with men and animals, and fired by the hand of the priest, bear a resemblance which can hardly be accidental to the brazen statue of Moloch. The worship not only of Moloch but of Astarte, of Bel (Belenus), of the Tyrian Hercules, found its unmistakable reflection in the religion of Gaul. Gregory of Tours mentions a hill in Auvergne which was known to him under the name of *Mons Belenatensis*. In the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland, the first of May went at one time by the name *La*

[1] Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. i. prelim. ch. 2.

[2] See *History of English Poetry* by Warton, ed. by W. Carew Hazlitt, vol. i., p. 95, note 6, in which the probability of a colony of Welsh wandering into Armorica is discussed, as well as the time of their settling there.

[3] *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi. c. 14.

Bealteine, and in the Isle of Man a priest was called *Belec*; and it is not impossible that Ampère may be right in tracing to the worship of the Babylonian Bel the common phrase of "being between two fires." The practice of driving the flock between two fires subsisted until recent times in the wilds of Ireland.

The Druids were themselves divided into three orders; the Ouadd, the Druid proper, and the Bard.[1] The Ouadd was the wielder of the sacrificial knife, and performed the most menial or ordinary duties of Druidic ritual. The Druid proper, who derived his name from the Cymric *derw*, the oak, was the divining priest, the oracle and interpreter, who presided at religious rites, who cut the sacred mistletoe, and was supposed to be in direct communion with Deity. The Bard was the inspired prophet and poet, the bearer of the harp, who sang the sacred mysteries of religion. He was the vehicle of learning, transmitted from generation to generation by means of verses which he had caught from the lips of his predecessors, and which he instilled into the minds of his pupils. He was at once the poet, the historian, and the teacher of his race; and to him the warrior chiefs looked to inflame the passions of the people on the eve of war. The Druidic poetry was never committed to writing, and hardly a trace of it—at all events of the ancient Gallic poetry—survives. Lucan, indeed, a Spaniard by birth, has a passage in his poem *Pharsalia*, the scene of which is partly laid in Gaul, which is in all probability inspired—to say the least of it—by the same thoughts which inspired the ancient bards. The passage is as follows:—

"There was a grove, never violated during long ages, which with its knitted branches shut in the darkened air and the cold shade, the rays of the sun being far removed. This no rustic Pans, and Fauns, and Nymphs, all-powerful in the groves,

[1] Toland, *History of the Druids*, ed. Huddleston, 1814, second letter § 3-4.

possessed, but sacred rites of the gods, barbarous in their ceremonial, and elevations crowned with ruthless altars, and every tree was stained with human gore. If at all, antiquity, struck with awe at the gods of heaven, has been deserving of belief; upon these branches, too, the birds of the air flew to perch, and the wild beasts to lie in the caves; nor does any wind blow upon those groves, and lightnings hurled from the dense clouds; a shuddering in themselves prevails among the trees that spread forth their branches to no breezes. Besides, from black springs plenteous water falls, and the saddened images of the gods are devoid of art, and stand unsightly, formed from hewn trunks. The very mouldiness and paleness of the rotting wood now renders people stricken with awe; not thus do they dread the deities consecrated with ordinary forms; so much does it add to the terror not to know what gods they are in dread of. Fame, too, reported that full oft the hollow caverns roared amid the earthquake, and that yews that had fallen rose again, and that flames shone from a grove that did not burn, and that serpents embracing the oaks entwined around them. The people throng that place with no approaching worship, but have left it to the Gods. When Phœbus is in the mid sky, or dark night possesses the heavens, the priest himself dreads the approach, and is afraid to meet with the guardian of the grove."[1]

The sacred forests of the Druids unquestionably live in modern literature, reappearing under the name of enchanted forests in the *fabliaux* and legends of later days. Such was the forest of Brockeliand, in Brittany, with its dark lake, whereof the surface being disturbed, a storm forthwith arose, and wonderful events took place; which sceptical Wace explored in the twelfth century, and, finding nothing, wrote:—

"Merveilles quis mais ne trouvai,
Fol m'en revins, fol y allai."

The Druidic bards were, in one phase, when they showed themselves sufficiently degraded to become the parasites of a powerful chief, forerunners of the most mercenary *jongleurs*

[1] *Pharsalia*, ed. Riley, bk. 3, v. 398

and troubadours of ten centuries later. Poseidonius, a contemporary of Cæsar, relates a story of Luern, the most powerful "King" amongst the Arvernians. One day, when he had given a great feast, a certain bard, who had been delayed in his arrival, found Luern on the point of departure; and not willing to lose his opportunity, he ran beside the king's chariot, and sang some impromptu verses, in which he extolled Luern and lamented his own delay. Luern took a purse of gold from one of his attendants and flung it to the bard; who, having picked it up, renewed his song in these words:—"The earth over which thy chariot-wheels pass instantly brings forth gold and precious gifts to enrich mankind."[1]

To the Druidic bards succeed the natural inheritors of their poetic gifts, the lay musicians who, in the six or seven centuries after Christ, hung upon the trains of mighty monarchs, or shared, in the mountain passes of western Europe, the straitened liberty of the unconquered Celts. In Brittany, however, we search for them in vain; but they made their home for many generations in Wales and Scotland. Of these the most celebrated were Taliessin and Merlin, whom a deathless tradition has preserved from generation to generation in loving memory. They are described as Christians and warriors; Christians who despised the monks, and warriors who did not love bloodshed for its own sake. In an early legend Taliessin is represented as saying contemptuously of the monks, "They know not the signs of the dawn; they cannot tell the path of the wind." And Merlin: "I will not receive the sacraments from these hateful black-clad monks; God Himself shall give me His sacraments."[2] If such was the language of Arthur's bard, no

[1] This story is differently related in Warton's *History of English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 135, note 3.

[2] Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. i. prelim. ch. iii. 56.

wonder Merlin has been stigmatised to all ages as a sorcerer. And however apocryphal may be all that we know of the utterances of Merlin, the Arthurian legends bear out the notion that the Christianity of the ancient Britons, and of their bards in particular, was but slightly sympathetic with the spirit of sacerdotalism.

The bardic poetry of Britain was doubtless of much the same character with the bardic poetry of Brittany; but, unfortunately, the latter has been lost in obscurity. There is indeed the tradition of a Breton bard of the fifth or sixth century, known by the name of Guinklan; and it is possible that even yet some relics of his songs may be brought to light. But the evidences of a national Gallic poetry in the first seven or eight centuries of the Christian era are extremely slight. Marie de France, a trouvère of the twelfth century, speaks of certain *lais bretons*,[1] from which she professes to have taken the subjects of several of her *fabliaux*. But only one of these fabliaux deals with the traditions of the Round Table. The themes of the rest are such as might be indigenous in any part of France; and thus, even if Mary learned them in Brittany, they may, as probably as not, have passed thither from Normandy. Nevertheless, the Arthurian legends are found current in France at the very dawn of her Middle-Age literature, and form the staple of her chivalric poetry; which adds a confirmation to the belief that the subjects, the spirit, and the manner of the post-Druidic bards were all but identical in Britain and in Gaul.[2]

§ 3. Remains of Iberian Poetry.

Amongst the traces which the ancient Iberians have left behind them in Aquitaine, Languedoc, and Provence, we may

[1] See Warton's *History of English Poetry*, ed. Hazlitt, vol. i., pp. 93-95, and p. 163, on the *Lais of Marie de France*.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 106, note 3.

mention certain names of places ; whereof Calagorris, in Aquitaine (now Cazères in the department of the Ariège), is an example, and which is clearly identical with Calahorra, in the north-east of Spain. Now the Basques of Spain and the Gascons of France are both representatives of the old Vascones, a later appellation of the Iberians ; and Calahorra is but the Basque form of the Gascon Calagorris, the name being given to two towns, one on either side of the Pyrenees, by the same Iberian race. A French historian has enumerated nineteen names of localities in Southern Gaul which are repeated in slightly different forms in the north of Spain. Nomenclature is, however, one of the least important aspects in which the opposite slopes of the Pyrenees declare to this day the common origin of their original inhabitants. The most distinctive feature, and the one which most assists our present investigations, is the similarity of personal characteristics, habits, and bent of thought between the two branches of the same race ; a similarity which displays itself through successive ages of history, which can be traced in every epoch of literature, and the remembrance of which will guide us to right conclusions where we might otherwise readily go astray. The Iberian character, as already observed, was especially lively, unconstrained, off-hand, independent, even eccentric. The Gascon spirit is proverbial in more senses than one; *gasconnade* being neither its best nor its worst element. "It has often been remarked," says M. Ampère, "that in reading the history of France one is astonished at the number of men of naturally easy manners, full of coolness and freedom, who have in every age turned up from the banks of the Garonne. To confine ourselves to literary history, observe the liveliness, the freshness, the readiness which distinguishes the character of many Gascon authors. Do they not all seem to write without premeditation? Look at Montaigne, Brantôme, d'Aubigné ; has not Montesquieu himself, with his great and serious qualities,

a certain agility and speed in his temper which seem to be at one with the sprightly and tripping attractiveness of his compatriots?"

The Iberian language was synthetical in the extreme, resembling in the multiplicity of its inflexions no European language so much as that of the Lapps, and none more than those of the Indian tribes of North America. In this respect it can have had but slight influence upon the Gallic tongue, and even less upon the amalgamated speech which we now call French. The tendency of grammatical laws was against it; the natural selection which has exhibited itself in language as much as in anything else, favoured, as we know, the Teutonic syntax, the Indo-European vocabulary. Nevertheless, the Gascon vocabulary has made some contributions to the modern French, of which only a very small proportion can be problematically traced back to their origin.[1] In the matter of alphabets the Iberians were superior to the Gauls; for they used more than one. That which has been most fully deciphered comes tolerably near to the Greek alphabet of sixteen characters, and was perhaps introduced by the Phœnicians.

Of the literature of the ancient Iberians, history says very little; but that little is suggestive. According to Strabo,[2] the Turditans, the most cultivated tribe of the Iberians, "understand the use of letters, and possess monuments inscribed with ancient records, poems, and laws in verse, reputed to be six thousand years old. The other Iberians have different alphabets and different tongues." And he

[1] Amongst them are such words as *ennui* (Basque *enojua*, fatigue, discontent); *aisé* (B. *aisia*, rest); *vague* (B. *bagà*, a wave). Larramendi, *Della Perfeccion de al Bascuence*, p. xxi. All these etymologies seem erroneous, or very doubtful. Compare also Diez, *Etymological Dictionary of the Romance Languages*, ed. by Donkin, which gives a different etymology of the above-mentioned words. Wedgwood, in his *Dictionary of English Etymology*, agrees in the main with Diez.

[2] Lib. 3, c. i.

speaks elsewhere of their culture and civilisation. The records of this early poetry are lost to us; but there exists in the Basque language a curious fragment relating to a stand made against the Romans in the time of Augustus, in the Biscayan mountains. The poem is doubtless of a later date than the battle, but it bears manifest signs of the rudeness of its original form, and the looseness of its transmission from age to age. Its language may have become modified in the process, but it probably represents fairly enough the spirit and the ideas of a very early age.

The bare facts of this obstinate resistance to Roman aggression seem to have been as follows: The Roman general, unable to force his way through the enemy's position, determined to reduce him by siege, hoping to gain by famine what he could not gain by force. It is said that the siege endured for several years, and was terminated at last by a pact honourable to both parties. Thus runs the poem in question:—

"The strangers from Rome wished to take Biscay by force;
and Biscay raised the song of war.
Octavian (is) the lord of the earth; Lecobidi of the Biscayans.
From the ocean, from the land; Octavian besieges us.
The parched plains are theirs; (ours are) the woods of the mountains, and the caves.
Favourably were we placed; each (of us) firm in his courage.
Light (is our) fear when our arms meet; (but) O our vessel of bread thou (art) ill-stored.
If they wear strong armour; the undefended bodies (are) active.
For five years, day and night; without any rest the siege endures.
When they slay one of us; fifteen of them (are) destroyed.
They being many, and we a little band; in the end we make peace.

§ 4. Influence of Greece on Gaul.

The most remote influences of Greek civilisation on Gaul were probably those which came in the train of Phœnician commerce. With the earliest Phœnicians there appear to have come a number of Rhodian settlers, who christened the Rhone (Rhodanus) after their native island, and built a town on its banks which bore the name of Rhodanisia. Of the Phœnician influence something has already been said; and it remains to be seen in what manner the Greeks themselves, contemporaries of the Phœnician merchants, who, either independently of, or in conjunction with them, settled from time to time on the Gallic sea-board, availed themselves of this new outlet of their genius. Herodotus does not mention Marseilles, though the colony was founded about a century before his time; and it is significant of the scantness of geographical knowledge amongst the Greeks in those days that the "father of history" makes the Danube rise in the Pyrenees. Even Diodorus Siculus, writing after Julius Cæsar, speaks of the rivers of Gaul as being covered with ice.

Strabo has preserved a fragment of Aeschylus, in which Prometheus tells Hercules how he came to the land of the Ligurians, and, being attacked by them, and having emptied his quiver, Jupiter sent him a cloud of stones. The allusion seems, from Strabo's context, to be to the plain of La Crau, on the left bank of the Rhone, which is covered with alluvial boulders for several miles in extent. And thus it happens that the country which, out of all Europe, was destined to receive the most notable impressions from Greek literature was itself the first to contribute to that literature, in however indirect a manner, a similitude for one of its grandest poets.

The date of the foundation of Marseilles is about 600 B.C.

Massalia was built by Phocæan colonists from Asia Minor; and in the time of Cæsar (who took it by storm in his Pompeian wars) it was at once the most prosperous and the most civilised town in Gaul. According to Strabo there was not a single man of leisure in Massalia who did not devote himself to rhetoric or philosophy. The whole southern coast of Gaul, from Spain to Italy, was strung with Greek towns—Narbo (Narbonne), Agathè Krenè (Agde), Olbia (Hyères), Antipolis (Antibes), with the islands of the Stechades, opposite to Massalia. Inland also the culture of the colonists extended, the most notable offshoot being at Thelinè, the modern Arles. The constitution of Massalia, and probably of the other Greek settlements, was originally Doric, with an aristocracy as its distinctive feature; and the "patrician severity" which Tacitus so greatly admires may have had something to do with the radical convictions of the Marseilles of to-day. Their most honoured divinity was the Doric Apollo, and after him Ephesian Diana. Phocæa had itself been founded, on the Asian coast, by emigrants from Phocis and Ionia; and the Phocæans had imported into Gaul the Diana whose central shrine was at Ephesus—the Ionian goddess of Asia, type of material beauty and unfettered natural life; not the chaste Doric Diana as worshipped by the Greeks at home.

Commerce was perhaps the most important vehicle of early Greek civilisation, and it was by commerce, without doubt, that Gallic civilisation learned to make her first strides in advance. The lower Rhone was, from the earliest historic period, a busy artery of commerce, as was the Loire on the west, with the thriving town of Corbilo at its mouth. Not only from historical records, such as the writings of Polybius,[1] but also from coins and inscriptions, we learn that Greek civilisation in various forms, religion, political institutions,

[1] Lib. 3.

commerce, the Greek alphabet, and to a certain extent the Greek language, existed in Gaul before the incursions of the Romans became frequent.[1]

Greek art followed in the train of Greek commerce and Greek institutions. Zenodorus of Clermont is mentioned by Pliny as an able sculptor. His statue of Mercury earned him such fame that he was sent for to Rome in order to execute a statue of Nero. On the other hand, Greek sculptors worked upon the bas-reliefs of Gallic monuments. Silver vases and statues, ornaments for the house and for the person, have been discovered as far north as Bernay in Normandy and Bavay in Flanders, which, though they may have been Gallic in conception, must certainly have been executed by the hands of Greeks.

The general persistence of the Greek colonists in the language, institutions, and ideas of their ancestral race has been remarked upon by many writers, and it was as striking a feature in Gaul as elsewhere. More than this, some have gone so far as to assert that they made their influence felt upon the surrounding race, even to the extent of impressing upon the national literature of their adopted home the stamp of their native country. The fact that it has been so, more or less indirectly, with the pastoral vein of Greek poetry, which has been in different ages imitated by the Latins, the French, and the English, requires no illustration. The troubadours in particular, as we shall hereafter see, affected the graceful thought and style of Theocritus; and their work may be described rather as rivalling than as merely imitating the Greek model. M. Fauriel[2] pushes the observation still further,

[1] At Avignon an inscription has been found wherein occur such forms as Κοιντος (quintus), Ερεννιος σεκουνδος, Ερεννιω πρεισεντι (Erennio præsenti), which show that, even after the Roman invasion, Greek characters continued to be used. At Emporiæ, a town which must have been originally Iberian, then Greek by colonisation, then Roman by conquest, coins have been found bearing legends in a medley of Iberian, Greek, and Latin characters.

[2] *Histoire de la Poésie provencale*, vol. i. pp. 83-130; vol. ii. pp. 96-98.

maintaining that the *aubades* and the *sérénades*, a *genre* which we might think so essentially French in its flavour, are but themes upon a note cherished through many ages of recollection from the Greek songs of dawn. The Greeks must not claim all that is exquisite and delicate in art, and we venture to challenge the correctness of M. Fauriel's surmise. Another conjecture is that certain early chivalric poems in France had their origin in Greek reminiscences—the adventures of the Provençal nobleman Raymond, for instance, in the legend of Ulysses. Raymond Dubousquet was three days tossed upon the sea; he returned after many wanderings to his Provençal home, hiding in the hut of a peasant. His castle and his wife had been appropriated by an importunate suitor, and, finally, he is recognised while in the bath by the scar of an old wound. The resemblance here to the story of Ulysses is not to be mistaken; and, as M. Ampère points out, it is not by the mediation of the schools that this coincidence is to be explained, but only on the supposition that the Odyssey was transmitted from the immigrant Phocæans to their descendants, and from them to the French bards.

The Greek tongue was spoken in southern Gaul certainly for six centuries after Christ, and probably for one or two more. When, in the fifth century, Nestorius wrote to Celestine I., Bishop of Rome, a letter in Greek, the latter had to send for a Marseilles scholar to translate it. A hundred years later the Bishop of Arles, having introduced a new psalmody from the east, directed that the priests and the people should sing alternate verses; and this, we are told, was done, sometimes in Latin, sometimes in Greek—the latter being introduced clearly on account of the number of people who understood that language without understanding Latin. Of Greek roots in the Provençal dialect there are even now said to be a certain number, whilst in the Middle Ages they were still

more abundant.[1] It would, of course, be unsafe to draw our illustrations on this point too freely from modern French, although there are instances in which the introduction of a Greek root, or perhaps an idiomatic Greek phrase, may be referred to the period of which we have been speaking ; and if this be true of the French language, it is undoubtedly true, in a much wider sense, of the Greek spirit.

Throughout the successive phases through which we pursue the course of French Literature, we will attempt to make it conspicuously manifest that the mantle of classical culture and intellectual refinement has fallen—not exclusively, but in a marked and special manner—upon the shoulders of France. Form, style, beauty, arrangement, precision,—these have been pre-eminently the virtues at which French authors have aimed, from the dawn to the noonday of their literature. The observance of classical rules and the attainment of classical standards have been the end which they sought, and the crown of their highest efforts ; until that which began by being a purely imitative and diffident process became what it now is—the spontaneous and unfettered exercise of classical taste. In England, also, there was a classical age, the results whereof upon the national style have been permanent (let us hope) and stable ; but, as it was not steadily aimed at and cultivated, as in France, so it was less brilliant in its advent, and less effectual in its influence. Moreover, we were in this

[1] In early Provençal literature we find some which are now obsolete, such as *pelech*, the sea ; *styl*, a column ; *idria*, a vase for water, and the like. Amongst modern Provençal words possibly of early Greek origin one of the most striking is *artoun*, bread, which is extant in the neighbourhood of Marseilles. See for the Greek elements in the Romance dialects, F. Diez, *Introduction to the Grammar of the Romance Languages*, who, however, in his Grammar, states that *artoun* is not from the Greek ἄρτος, but probably from the Basque *artoa*, maize-bread, which Humboldt says meant originally acorn-bread, from *artea*, a sort of oak. Brachet, in his *Etymological French Dictionary*, says, "The Greek language has scarcely given anything to the French since the time of its popular formation."

respect a hundred years behind our neighbours—behind them by at least the interval which elapsed between Racine and Addison, or between the youth of Massillon and the old age of Johnson.

History and tradition are all but silent as regards the written literature of Massalia, and of the Greeks generally in Gaul. But it would be unjust to omit all mention of Pytheas in a work on French literature. About four centuries before Christ Massalia despatched two travellers—precursors of all African and Arctic expeditions;—Euthymenes to Senegal, and Pytheas towards the frozen ocean. The latter brought back strange tales of what he had discovered, and he has been amply laughed at for his pains—by Strabo, by Polybius, by Bayle, and others. Undoubtedly Pytheas may have been an insatiable devourer of fables, even if he did not embroider his facts. So also was Herodotus, and travellers of a much later day than that of Mandeville. One fable of this same Pytheas, related by Apollonius of Rhodes—to the effect that a piece of unwrought iron, left overnight on Vulcan's islands of Lipara and Strongyle, whilst at the same time the supposed value of the labour was deposited, would be found next day worked into a sword or a spearhead—has at least had the credit of inspiring many a legend in succeeding ages. Witness the Valley of the White Horse in *Kenilworth*, and the legend of the vale of Berkshire, which, the missing links supplied, would probably find their origin in the fertile brain of the Massalian.

§ 5. Influence of Rome in Gaul.

After Greece Rome; in the annals of their national glory, in their entry into Gaul, in the order of their influence upon the mind of France, in the degree of authority exerted by their respective civilisations. Greece, the commercial nation,

had charmed and penetrated her hosts by her poetry, her rhetoric, her arts; Rome, the military nation, remodelled her victims by her laws, her administration, her moral vigour.[1]

Something has already been said of the work of Cæsar in Gaul. He had so far subjugated the country that there was, at the time of his death, no longer an army that dare face him in the field. But he left much for his successors to do. Cicero, speaking of the consular provinces,[2] said: "Great nations have been conquered by Cæsar, but they have not yet been bound down by laws, by an undisputed system of justice,[3] by a solid peace." The work was undertaken by Augustus and those who wore the purple after him; and they set themselves steadily to Romanise the Gallic nationality. Anything like national spirit and patriotism was henceforth a heinous crime, crushed out as soon as it showed itself. They established municipalities, and distributed Roman officials throughout the country, almost entirely irrespective of national needs and traditions. They put back the boundary of Aquitaine from the Garonne to the Loire, thus confounding Iberians and Celts under the superimposed name of Romans. They made Lyons, then an unimportant place, the political centre of the country. In some instances the names of places were capriciously altered. Thus Bibracte became Augusto-dunum (Autun); and later still it reappears as Flavia. Claudius, himself a Gaul by birth, continued the work of denationalisation. It is true that his methods were more statesmanlike. Cæsar had admitted the Narbonensians to the Roman Senate; Claudius extended the privilege, and, but for his premature death, would have still further conciliated the people. Vespasian, again, displayed discrimination in his Gallic policy. About a hundred years after the death of Julius Cæsar the Gauls

[1] See Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. i. prelim. ch. 6, p. 128.
[2] *De Provinciis Consularibus.* [3] *Certo jure.*

made several attempts to regain their independence. Sacrovir, an Aeduan, unable to incite his fellow-countrymen to war, had stabbed and burnt himself in his house at Autun. Sabinus not only took up arms, but aspired to the Roman purple; and he suffered under Vespasian the natural reward of his temerity. Claudius Civilis followed; but as his ambition had not gone beyond the liberation of the Batavi, the emperor pardoned him (A.D. 70). In the second century history is all but silent concerning Gaul. It was the age of the Antonines, and the world had comparative rest. Then the demoralisation of the Empire fairly set in, and Gaul shared the fate of Rome's other dependencies, and of Rome herself. The legionaries preyed upon the countries in which they were settled; the generals quarrelled, and even fought out their private grievances in the face of the subjugated people; Severus himself sacked the city of Lyons on the most flimsy pretext. Gaul, too, became demoralised with her masters, and no determined effort was made to cast off their yoke.

It was in letters as in society and politics; the intellectual existence of Gaul, as well as her physical existence, was to be inextricably interwoven with that of her Roman conquerors. Gaul's destiny was to follow the principal phases of contemporary Latin literature; and she began forthwith to play her part. Hence arises one of the most remarkable features of her early literary history; the great number of Gallic orators, or rather rhetoricians and grammarians,[1] who spoke and wrote in the Latin tongue. Amongst the Gallo-Romans who thus adorned the land of their birth before the prevalence of Christianity, we may name[2] Valerius Cato, Roscius, Varro Atacinus, Cornelius Gallus (immortalised by a dedication of

[1] By the word grammarian the Alexandrians understood very much what we describe as "a man of letters."

[2] Suetonius (*De Illustribus Grammaticis*) mentions Octavius Teucer, Siscennius Jacchus, Oppius Cares.

Virgil),[1] Trogus Pompeius, Marcus Aper, Domitius Afer, and Petronius, who, as has been pungently observed,[2] "kneaded into statues of exquisite workmanship the Roman filth."

§ 6. Influence of Germany on Gaul.

Towards the close of the third century another enemy fastened itself upon the doomed country. The Franks crossed the Rhine, and, uniting with their brethren upon the left bank, in the district which had already come to be known as Upper and Lower Germany, overran Gaul, and even Spain. The theatre of events was from this time[3] gradually transferred from the south to the north; or at least it was in the north that the Franks met with the most obstinate resistance and settled themselves most firmly. It was in the north also that the Emperor Julian[4] made Parisii Lutetiorum the seat of imperial government. The Germans, however, can hardly be said to have established themselves in Roman Gaul, to any large extent, before the beginning of the fifth century. Meanwhile the country became more and more demoralised under the corrupt tyranny of Rome. Speaking of the age of Diocletian, Constantine, and their successors, a French historian says:[5] "The reign of the legions ends; the power of the palace domestic begins." From palace domestics spring dukes and counts; from besotted and weak-minded emperors a foolish aristocracy. From the two together were generated the wars of the Bagaudes, antetype of the Jacquerie, which endured with greater or less vigour for some two centuries, and in one of which Augusto-dunum, with her Latin schools, was destroyed. In fact, Gaul was at this period, in the worst sense of the word, enslaved. From this depth Christianity

[1] Virgil dedicated his Tenth Eclogue to him.
[2] Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. i. ch. i. p. 156. [3] 284.
[4] 357. [5] M. Lavallée, *Histoire des Français.*

was to raise her; and it was under a Christian standard that Constantine led an army of Gauls to triumph over his enemies at Rome.[1]

Of the Teutonic invaders who now overran the country, the Visigoths occupied Southern Gaul and Spain, overlapping the Iberian race; the Ostrogoths settled in Northern Italy; the Vandals, including Burgundians and Longobards, halted, on their way to Spain, in Eastern Gaul and Italy; the Franks, including the Salians from the Ysel and the Ripuarians from the Rhine, formed the bulk of the newcomers, and spread over the whole of Northern Gaul.

On a winter's day, the last of the year 406, a vast host of Goths, Vandals, Huns, and Allemans crossed the Rhine on the ice, and, pushing westward, gained their first great victory at Moguntiacum (Mainz), where they slaughtered hundreds of citizens in the cathedral. They traversed the country without any notable check, and penetrated even to the extreme south-west. The Bagaudes rose again and added to the chaos of slaughter. In 412 came the Visigoths under Ataulf, who, two years afterwards, married Placidia, sister of the Emperor Honorius. The Burgundians seized a new home between the Rhone and the Jura, where the brave Sequanians had once dwelt. They were Christians, and perhaps of all the Teutons the most peaceable, if they met with no opposition. Orosius says that they treated the Gallo-Romans like brothers. In 419 Honorius, who has the credit of being the first voluntarily to alienate the soil of France, ceded to the Visigoths the district cut off by a line running from the mouth of the Loire to a point a little eastward of Narbonne, including such important towns as Santones (Saintes), Burdigalia (Bordeaux), Pictavi (Poitiers), and Tolosa (Toulouse). The Visigoth, like the Burgundian, was disposed to be amicable with his neighbours. He took half of the forests, two-thirds of the culti-

[1] 312.

vated lands, and one-third of the slaves—very approximately, no doubt, in the proportion in which he felt himself fitted to manage his new possessions. The Gallo-Romans displayed a certain characteristic politeness and equanimity on the occasion. They styled themselves "hosts," and the forcible settlement "hospitality." So both sides took matters philosophically, and amalgamation began forthwith.

A generation passed, and then barbarism in its worst form launched itself against western civilisation. Attila—whom under the name of Etzel we meet with in the *Nibelungen Lied*—bore down on Gaul,[1] at the head of vast hordes of Teutons, Slaves, and even Tartars, and pushed his conquest as far as Aureliacum (Orléans). There he was encountered by Theodosius, the king of the Visigoths, with his son Torismund, and Aetius, a Roman general. Etzel fell back to Campi Catalaunici (Châlons), and there the invaders were routed, though the king did not live to be hailed the conqueror. And so Europe was saved from Tartar rule. But Rome was past saving. Aetius, who in happier times might have been a Cæsar, fell by the hand of Valentinian; Torismund was slain by his own brothers; and Aegidius, who fought for Rome in Gaul, was assassinated.[2] And now the Roman empire crumbled to pieces like a burning ruin. Julius Nepos,[3] Emperor of the West, ceded the whole of Gaul, westward of the Rhone, to the Visigoths. Britain, Greece, Spain, and Italy, fell asunder from the mouldering edifice. The very date of Rome's crowning disaster is uncertain, when the Goth, Odoacer, took the Eternal City and sent the imperial emblems to Constantinople. From the ruins of Rome's splendid fortunes two bastard empires were indeed to rise. The one was the spiritual dominion of the Church, destined to rule as imperially, and to decay, perhaps, as hopelessly as the dominion of the sword; the other, bearing the proud title of the Holy

[1] 451. [2] 464. [3] 474.

Roman Empire, was to be built out of the very barbarian elements which, alone amongst barbarians, never learned to endure the yoke of Rome.

Odoacer resigned to Ewarik, a Visigoth, such authority as he had wielded in Gaul; and if Ewarik had lived longer he might have cemented the power of the Goths. But the star of Clovis[1] was in the ascendant, and it was for the Franks that the supremacy in Gaul was reserved. The Franks were the old friends and allies of the Roman people, and they had long remained content with the western bank of the Rhine. But on the decay of Rome they caught the infection from their Teutonic brethren. In 481, Childéric, king of the Salian Franks, died, leaving his son Clovis, a boy of fifteen, to succeed him. The youthful chief won the hearts of his people, and in 486, at the age of twenty-one, he entered Gaul, and defeated Syagrius, the last Roman who fought under the shadow of the Roman name. In 496 he repelled the Allemans, who were invading Gaul by way of the Ripuarian Franks. This battle, fought near Zulpich (Tolbiac), was the crisis of Clovis's fortunes and of the fortunes of France. The Franks were pagans; but Clovis had married the Christian Clotilde (Hlotehild), daughter of a Burgundian chief, influenced thereto by the judicious Remigius, bishop of Rheims, who had gained the friendship of the young Frank. The battle of Zulpich was at first doubtful, and Clovis swore to Clotilde that, if he gained the victory, her God should be his God. The victory was gained; Clovis, whose example was followed by 3000 of his warriors, kept his word. Christianity was wedded with the sword, and the Church secured to her new convert the kingdom which he coveted. Before Clovis died[2] he was not only the sole head of the Franks, but virtual master of the whole of Gaul, except Aquitaine,

[1] Hlodowig, the *h* being a guttural, and rendered in Latin by *c*. The first Latinised form was Chlodovechus, then Ludovicus.

[2] 511.

Brittany, and a neighbouring portion of Normandy. During the half-century succeeding Clovis's death, his kingdom was divided into three parts—Burgundy, Austrasia (on either bank of the Rhine), and Neustria (between the Loire and the Meuse). Neustria was added to Austrasia by Pepin of Héristal.[1] Thus the Merving dynasty ended, and the Karoling dynasty began; and in the year 771, Karl the Great, commonly called Charlemagne, once more united all the Franks under a single sceptre.

Such, in mere outline, was the chain of events by which Pagan and Roman Gaul became changed into Christian France; and it is to the growth of Christianity in Gaul that we must look for the mainsprings of early French literature. But before passing on to this task it is necessary that we should inquire what were the principal influences of the Germanic infusion upon the social and intellectual condition of Gaul.

The German was a bigger, duller, simpler, more reserved and more independent man than his western neighbour; and, of course, at the time of his irruption into Gaul, he was less civilised. Characteristically a silent man, he was not clever at talking, and had no taste for oratory; whereas the Gaul was essentially a talker, and could talk well. The German was a child of the forest, who was accustomed to hunt his food before he ate it, and to dress himself in the skins of his prey. The Gaul preferred life in communities, and especially in well-built and well-governed towns, and his favourite dress, as we have seen, was such as would attract notice in a crowd. The German was, furthermore, domestic, and, as a rule, pure in his affections; the Gaul preferred a wider social circle than could be enjoyed in a single family or household, and his relations with his fellow-creatures were somewhat loose and light. The religion of the German was for the most part as between God and the individual; whilst that of the Gaul

[1] 687.

was rather as between God and the tribe. Herein we may detect the characteristics which subsequently made the Teutonic race the leaders of a Protestant reaction; whilst the descendants of the Gaul, the Iberian, the Roman, have clung to the hierarchical system of the Latin Church. The Gaul, again, readily admitted the institution of slavery; but the German has never failed to repudiate it. In the Gallo-Roman household the slave was a conspicuous element; but the well-to-do German was a patriarch in his own house, surrounded by his *leudes*—hangers-on, but not slaves—his *antrustions* (trusty fellows), and his *gesellen* or *gesithas* (comrades).

The predominance of the Franks in Gaul meant the predominance of these qualities in France for many generations, at all events until the general character of Frenchmen had become deeply imbued with the special virtues of their conquerors. On the development of Christianity in France, the Franks had, as will presently be seen, a powerful effect. If, in the ultimate formation of the French national character, the Gallic peculiarities have prevailed over the German—so different to what has happened in England between the ancient Britons and the Teutonic element—it is at least not difficult to trace through successive generations the important and durable influences of the Franks, the Goths, and the Burgundians. It was not long after the definite settlement of the Germans in Gaul that this action and reaction of race-characteristics began to manifest itself. The invaders freed the Gallo-Romans from much of their former dependence and helplessness; but, on the other hand, the freedom of the meaner Germans gradually diminished, and domestic slavery, in spite of their manly efforts, gradually immeshed them. The two extreme conditions of society, which usually flourish side by side—slavery and an aristocracy of wealth and might—all but effaced the middle classes. For several centuries we find little trace of the latter except in commercial towns and muni-

cipalities; whereas the efforts from below and the oppression from above bear witness to the continual tendency of humanity to redress itself. And in particular the old Bagaudes broke out from time to time—largely recruited by the additional force which the people had acquired by the intermixture of races. The wars of kings and mayors succeeded for a long time in checking the wars between the enslaved and the powerful; but when the kings ceased to fight the people had their day.

The speech of the invading Germans was not identical amongst the several tribes; and their dialects were again distinct from the language of the Goths. All were affiliated to the Indo-Teutonic family of tongues, and bore to each other a closer relationship than did any of them to the Celtic or Iberian. It is not necessary for us to pursue these differences of speech, which have left few corresponding traces in the modern French tongue. It was the adopted Latin of the Gallo-Romans which was finally developed into the French of the troubadours and of the Renaissance; and it was this language which the Franks were compelled to learn before they could govern their new possessions. Nor was the German literature much more influential upon the people who had been fascinated by and who sedulously cultivated the literature of Rome. Nevertheless it is important that we should bear in mind what the German literature actually was.[1]

The art of poetry, cultivated in some form or other by every nation, however young, was in the Teutonic race the first art brought to anything like perfection. The early poetic literature of the Germans was rich and varied; they not only had the rudimentary lyric poetry common to all warlike tribes —songs of triumph, of mourning, of commemoration,—but they could boast of didactic poems, and of grand national epics like the Nibelungen Lied. The epic commemorating the

[1] For an able summary read Ozanam, *Etudes Germaniques*, i., *La Poésie.*

deeds of the Visigoth Brunhild, wife of Siegbert, King of Austrasia, would indeed rightly belong to the literature of France—as they do to her history—if the Franks of the sixth century had not yet been purely German; and had not their epics been written in the German language. It is perhaps a matter of surprise that the wars of the Neustrians, Austrasians, Burgundians, and Goths, have not left a deeper mark on French literature. If the reason is not already sufficiently evident, it will become more so as we proceed.

Yet one instance of a few may be here given, in which a Teutonic legend—which may probably be of Greek origin—has found a permanent home in France, and has reproduced itself in the French chivalrous romance. It is the legend which we glanced at ten pages back, the legend of the forgeman Vieland, which is to be met with in every Germanic tongue. In Iceland, to this day, a good smith is known by the name of a "volundr." An early English poem narrates the sorrows of Vieland, who shod the horses of travellers as they broke their journey at his forge in Berkshire.[1] And the early French legends record how Galand (or Waland) made the three famous blades, Flamberge, Hauteclere, and Joyeuse.

[1] For an interesting epitome of nearly everything relating to the forgeman Wayland Smith, see Warton, *History of English Poetry*, ed. Hazlitt, i., Price's preface, pp. 63-65, and also vol. i. p. 135, note 1.

CHAPTER II

§ 1. Influence of Christianity.

Practically speaking, the only written literature existing in France for many centuries after the birth of Christ consisted of the Latin and Greek writings of the Christian fathers and doctors, together with the works, in the same ancient tongues, of a few pagan grammarians and rhetoricians. As the popular literature, rarely committed to writing, and sung for the most part in the Iberian, Celtic, or Teutonic language, was confined exclusively to poetry, so the Latin and Greek writings, to which we have referred, were composed, as a rule, in more or less ornate prose. One or two Latin poets of Gallic origin have already been named, who acquired no inconsiderable fame amongst their contemporaries; but they had secured this fame only by residing in Rome, under the patronage of influential men, and appealing to the wider audience of cultivated Italy.

In estimating the effect produced upon the intellectual development of Gaul by Christian institutions and Christian writings, we must take into account the peculiar circumstances of the early Gallic Church. The converts were, to begin with, a small and persecuted sect; Greek emigrants from Asia Minor, the first of whom had possibly seen the Apostle to the Gentiles; and, after them, soldiers or runaway slaves from Rome. The earliest Christian community appears to have been founded at Lyons, which, from the time of

Augustus, had been the capital of Roman Gaul. Here, and at Vienne, the converts furtively worshipped, under the spiritual direction of Pothinus, an Asiatic Greek, who had been a disciple of Polycarp, said by some to have been a contemporary of the Apostles. The Greek origin of this first Gallican Christian Church is still further confirmed by tradition, as well as by the famous letter of the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, which was written to Greeks in the Greek language.

This letter[1] was addressed by the martyrs from their prison, after enduring torture and mutilation, expecting every moment to be led out to death. They had braved the cruelty of the authorities; but certain Christian slaves being less constant, had given way beneath their torments, and had accused their masters of nameless crimes. One of them, however, the young Blandina, had shown extreme fortitude, saying, "I am a Christian; and no wickedness is carried on by us." For her reward she is held as the protomartyr of France, her name coming first in the commemoration of that glorious little band, in almost all the ancient martyrologies. The inscription of the letter referred to is as follows: "The servants of Jesus Christ, dwelling at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, to the brethren of Asia and Phrygia, having the same faith and hope with us." After giving particulars of the persecution, the letter proceeds to say that there were about ten who fell through weakness, being ill prepared for the strife; that their fall afflicted them greatly, and depressed the courage of others who, not having yet been seized, were attending on the martyrs, and would not leave them, in spite of all which they had to endure, and that they were all in great fear by reason of the uncertainty of their confession; not dreading tortures, but looking to the end, and fearing lest one of them should

[1] The letter is given in the *Ecclesiastical History* by Eusebius. Its authority is accepted by the majority of historians and critics, though Sismondi rejects it.

fall. And in describing the butchery the writer says, "The martyrs offered to God a crown of many colours, wherein shone all kinds of assorted flowers."

The first father of Gaul was Irenæus, another of Polycarp's disciples, and himself a Greek. He never lost his admiration for the Pagan literature of his native country, quoting Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, and the great dramatists. He was at Lyons during the persecution under Marcus Aurelius,[1] and Eusebius informs us that it was he who carried from the martyrs a second letter to Eleutherus, the Bishop of Rome. At all events he did not undertake this journey, as has been said, to obtain his appointment as successor to Pothinus, whom he replaced in the episcopal see of Lyons. It could not occur to any one, at the close of the second century, that the election of a bishop need be approved or confirmed by the Bishop of Rome.[2] The subsequent conduct of Irenæus in the dispute between eastern and western Christians concerning the observance of Easter, precludes the idea that he regarded Rome as supreme in the ecclesiastical economy. He held the Roman view of the matter, but he protested against the attempt to enforce it upon others, and energetically counselled the eastern bishops to maintain their independence. Thus the sturdy tone of the Gallican Church, which was destined to be characteristic of all Christian Churches of Greek origin, was manifested in the earliest age of French Christianity.

The only extant work of Irenæus is his *Treatise on Heresies*, wherein he attacks the errors of Gnosticism, and the other primary corruptions of the Christian faith. It is important to observe that already, at the close of the second century, we find emanating from French Christianity two species of documents which were to have a lasting influence upon French literature; namely, the "dogmatic treatise," in

[1] 177. [2] Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. i. ch. 2, p. 169.

a style severe, classical, more or less ornate, and the records of Christian suffering, the basis of future "martyrologies." To these must be added a third species, the letters written from church to church, containing edifying records of the death of children and others, which were read out in an interval of divine service, and which formed the foundation of the "sacred legends," which have in all ages been a speciality of Christian literature.

Such were the elements of Christian literature in France; but the vista thus opened is instantly closed again. For more than a century after the death of Irenæus, no doctor, no commentator on Christian dogma, ethics, or history, wrote in Gaul what succeeding generations cared to imitate or preserve; or, at all events, no documents of the character indicated are extant. But the third century has a literature of its own; and Gaul boasts during this period many grammarians, orators, and panegyrists, who adorned—or rather illumined—the paganism of the time. Their style was distinctly classical, though their matter was not always so. They were classical in the most meagre and least worthy sense; being utterly devoid of originality, and yet adepts in the art of imitation. They shaped their writings upon the best models; and the genius of their race, to whom Cato ascribes the gift *argutè loqui*, enabled them to succeed in producing elegant copies of their originals. One of the best of these writers was Titian, who taught rhetoric in the schools of Lyons and Besançon (the Roman Lugdunum and Vesontio). Much admired in his own day, and even since, he has been called the ape of orators. His favourite productions were imitations of Ovid in manner and of Cicero in style; consisting of fictitious letters from famous women of ancient times. Mademoiselle de Scudéry wrote something like it, in *les Femmes illustres*, and Walter Savage Landor, in England, in some of his *Imaginary Conversations;* and perhaps neither of the

latter would yield to Titian in his attachment to the literary forms of classic Rome.

§ 2. The Panegyrists.

The panegyrists are the most prominent figures of this period. The Gallo-Romans who could write well seem to have vied with each other in declaiming on the virtues and glories of the great men of their day, from the Emperors downwards; and as the Emperors of Rome in her decadence loved Gaul, and frequently resided there, one cannot be at a loss to find probable reasons for the complacencies of these literary men. It speaks little for the national spirit of independence, and less for the self-respect of those whose culture might have raised them above a taste for sycophancy; but the fact remains that these panegyrics, though built upon Greek models, or imitated after the least worthy of the Roman eulogists, were in this age pre-eminently characteristic of Gallic writers. A collection has been made of twelve *Panegirici Veteres*, as affording a sample of what the third century produced; and ten of these are the work of Gallo-Romans. The name of this kind of composition is, like its origin, Greek; for it was during the Olympic Games that the earliest panegyrics—extempore discourses on an assigned subject—were spoken. The coarser idea of personal eulogy was of later date, and was accepted by the Gallo-Romans—of course as being congenial—from the neighbours whom they strove so sedulously to imitate. Nevertheless their immediate models were Latin, not Greek; and the eulogy of Trajan by Pliny was the great exemplar.

Of the ten panegyrics referred to, two were pronounced before the Emperor Maximian I., in honour of himself and of Diocletian, A.D. 292. They have been wrongly ascribed to Mamertinus, who declaimed before Julian seventy years later.

Their authorship cannot be assigned; and it is no more than a surmise that they were spoken at Treves on the Rhine. With respect to another, uttered in the year 296 at Autun, before Constantius Chlorus, the particulars are more exact. It was the work of Eumenius, a Greek by parentage but Gallic by birth. He was under the patronage of Chlorus, held a legal appointment, and was a director of schools; and the little that we know of him entitles him to be absolved from the reproach which his panegyric might be supposed to attach to his memory. For we are told that when the Emperor bestowed upon him offices amounting in value to something like one thousand pounds of our present money, Eumenius accepted them only on the condition of applying the proceeds to the restoration of the schools at Autun; which thenceforth recovered their ancient repute—a repute at least as old as the time of Tacitus.

The panegyric of Eumenius is addressed to the prefect of the province who represented Chlorus in his absence, and whom the orator styles "vir perfectissimus"—whether conventionally, or out of a genuine appreciation of his merits, or, as a commentator suggests, as an exhortation to deserve the title. One of the most striking passages in the oration is that wherein Eumenius contrasts the rhetoric of the school with the forensic eloquence of the courts. "Here," he says, "the wits arm themselves, there they fight; here is the skirmish, there the onslaught; here they attack each other with arrows and stones, there they cross their gleaming swords!"

This is perhaps the most worthy and independent of the Gallo-Roman panegyrics, which would hardly have repaid even this short notice if they had not been almost the only evidence of literary activity in Gaul during the third century. Hard pushed by the Germans, crushed and plundered by the Romans, disturbed by the insurrections of the peasants, the unfortunate country had but little spirit or opportunity for

intellectual exertion. That which they did display was directed, as we have seen, to a more or less abject flattery of the Roman Emperors. One of the panegyrists praises Constantine for his slaughter of the barbarians, declaring that the very beasts were satiated by the number of their victims. Another asks, "What is there more grand than the triumph which makes the destruction of our enemies contribute to our pleasures?" Another traces the descent of Maximian from Hercules, asserting Alexander himself too humble for the purpose of comparison.

Meanwhile the social condition of the country was by no means the chaos which we might have expected to find it. Side by side with the despotic government of the Romans, and with the hardly less despotic government of the Goths and Franks, who succeeded them; side by side with the aristocracy which had been introduced into the Greek colonies of the south, or which had grown up spontaneously in other parts of Gaul; in spite of the incursions of barbarians, in spite of grinding taxation, of slavery, of insurrections, we find throughout these Ages, dating its origin almost before the records of trustworthy history, growing gradually in power and stability, a democratic element, municipal right, free citizenship. Roman despotism resigned its position as guardian over the State; the German invaders fought amongst themselves, seldom on any other plea than that of selfish interest; the aristocracy showed no coherent power which was capable of rescuing society from imminent dissolution; but the municipalities survived. The cities became asylums for those who fled to them for refuge, and they kept alive the flickering flame of learning and literature in the schools. Based, doubtless, on the foundation of commerce and trade, these Gallic municipalities raised a standard of comparative order and good government under which letters and religion rallied for renewed efforts, and prepared for further conquests. And it is

to Christianity in particular—to the Christianity of Irenæus and of the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons, cherished and handed down during this silent epoch in the history of the Gallic intellect—that we must look for the regeneration of intellectual life.

§ 3. The Teachers.

The Christian Church in Gaul in the second century was a Greek Church; in the fourth century it was a Latin Church. After the time of Irenæus we hear little more of the community of Christians at Lyons, whilst, during the third and fourth centuries, we find many accounts of Roman evangelists and Roman martyrs. Nevertheless the Gallic Church maintains many of the characteristics which were impressed upon it in its first phase, and never loses its distinctive feature of independence, although, of course, it soon came to acknowledge the spiritual pre-eminence of Rome. The accounts of the foundation of the Gallo-Roman Church differ considerably, and it is not for us to decide between them. One thing, however, is certain and natural, that Gaul was to a large extent Christianised from within. The "little leaven" of the early Greek Churches in the south spread far and wide during the second and third centuries, and the blood of the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons became the seed of the Gallican Church. Priority in point of time would render this a matter of course, but it is not to be doubted that the Roman Christians who followed them carried the Gospel into regions whither the disciples of Irenæus and Photinus had never penetrated. Gregory of Tours,[1] who asserts that Irenæus himself suffered "horrible torments," relates that in the reign of the Emperor Decius, after a widespread persecution of the Christians, during which the Roman believers would naturally be scat-

[1] Born 539.

tered throughout the Latin-speaking colonies of Europe, seven persons of the rank of bishops "were sent to preach in Gaul;" and he gives for his authority "the history of the sufferings of the holy martyr Saturninus," one of the seven, and the first bishop of Toulouse. The other six were Gatian of Tours, Paul of Narbonne, Martial of Limoges, Stremon of Clermont, Trophimus of Arles, and Bacchus or Denis of Paris. It will be observed that the latter names are Greek, so that even under this new evangelisation Christianity came to Gaul in combination with Greek ideas and idiosyncrasies. A disciple of one of these, says Gregory, went to Bourges, and there made converts and ordained priests. Requiring a house in which to celebrate divine worship, and his converts being amongst the poorest citizens, he went to "one of the leading senators[1] in Gaul," Leocades, a descendant of the Lyons martyr Vettius Epagathus, and therefore a Greek, and stated their need. Leocades replied, "If the house which I own in Bourges is worthy of such an employment, I will not refuse it." Whereupon they offered him three hundred pieces of gold and a silver dish, assuring him that his house *was* worthy. Leocades took three pieces in token of good will, and, furthermore, himself became a Christian. The story has its manifest improbabilities, but, even if it were not true, it would be characteristic.

After the persecutions under Diocletian the Christians had a respite from their sufferings under his successor Constantine, the thirty-fourth Roman Emperor, who accepted the new faith. He was a patron of letters as well as of Christianity, and Jerome asserts that he encouraged Juvencus to paraphrase the Gospel in verse. During his reign the first Christian councils were held in Gaul. That of Arles, A.D. 314, was convened for the purpose of considering and pro-

[1] Gregory uses the word "senators" of municipal councillors, as well as of members of the Roman Senate, or sometimes of any one whose family had produced a man of senatorial mark.

nouncing upon the Donatist heresy. Forty-four churches were here represented, of which sixteen were Gallic, and the place of meeting attests the activity and influence of the Gallic Christians. The second council was held at Nicæa, A.D. 325. The Emperor Constantine attended both these councils, and formally directed their deliberations. The very presence of the Emperor in a council was a triumph of the Church, and bore witness to its victory rather than to its submission.[1] Sixteen councils were held during the fourth century, almost all in Gaul, and at least six of these were confined to the bishops of Gaul alone.

To this century belongs the poet and philosopher Lactantius,[2] an African Roman settled at Treves. He began life as a pagan rhetorician, being a disciple of the African Arnobius. He adopted Christianity during the persecution under Diocletian, and in the year 317 he came to Gaul as tutor to one of the sons of Constantine. His principal philosophical work is his *Divine Institutions.* He also wrote treatises on the *Anger of God* and on the *Death of Persecutors.* Some are even inclined to credit him with the authorship of the *Phœnix,* a poem in the Ovidian style, though they do so on grounds which are not sufficient to establish more than a probability. He was certainly a genuine man of letters, whose literary tastes were moulded upon the classic poets and orators of Rome, and he has been not undeservedly called the "Christian Cicero." He was a zealous apologist of his adopted faith, though his detractors have made a list of ninety-four passages in which his orthodoxy is subject to exception. He certainly displayed his catholic judgment in the freedom of his appeal to pagan authorities, passing in this respect far beyond the example of St. Paul and Irenæus, though not reaching the point attained in later days by Jeremy Taylor. Less catholic in spirit was the prejudice manifested by Lactantius against

[1] Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France,* vol. i., leçon 3. [2] 250-330.

the enemies of Christianity, whom he consigned to everlasting shame and torment, and in whom he would see no redeeming points. Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and other pagan emperors, who were by no means destitute of noble qualities, he places on a level with Nero and Diocletian. "Where are they?" he exclaims. "God has destroyed them; they are blotted out from the earth."

His *Divine Institutions* consist of a defence of Christianity and an exposition of Christian dogma; and whilst they are crude and imperfect in their argument, trying to prove too much and proving nothing thoroughly, they are nevertheless elegant in style and persuasive in manner, calculated, therefore, to exert no inconsiderable influence on succeeding generations. He was strongly imbued with the idea that the work of destruction would be homologous with the work of creation so far as the material world was concerned; that after six millenniums of humanity's labour there would come a millennium of rest for the human race, when Jesus Christ would reign visibly on earth. He himself was born towards the close of the sixth millennium; the world had reached its *tempora pessima, ultima tempora*, and the catastrophe was at hand.

"The whole earth," he says, "shall be in confusion; war shall rage throughout; nations shall take arms, and attack each other. . . . The sword shall pass through the world, sweeping down and laying low as it were a harvest; and the cause of this desolation and bloodshed shall be that the Roman name, which now governs the universe (it is hard to say it, but I say it because it must be)—the Roman name shall be wiped from the earth. The empire shall return to the east, the east shall reign again, and the west shall be subdued." And again, presaging ruin from the north:—"Then shall come a hateful, abominable time, when life shall be pleasant to no man. Cities shall be turned upside

down; they shall perish, not only by water and fire, but by earthquakes, deluges, plagues, and famines. The air shall be corrupted and plague-stricken. . . . The land shall bear fruit no more; the harvest, the tree, the vine shall be smitten with barrenness; the streams and springs shall dry up; their waters shall be turned to blood and bitterness; the animals shall die, upon earth, in the air, and in the sea."

Then follow prophecies more distinct, of Antichrist and of the second coming of the Lord:—"The heavens shall be opened in the middle of a dark and stormy night. To the whole universe shall appear, like a sheet of lightning, the splendour of the descending God. But, before descending, the liberator, the judge, the avenger, the King, shall cause a sign to appear: a sword shall suddenly fall from heaven, that the just may know that the leader of the holy army is at hand." Of such a kind are the outbursts of imagination and poetry which proclaim the predecessor of the eloquent pulpit-orators of the age of Louis XIV.

Another Gaul of the fourth century, a native of Bordeaux, successively a professor of rhetoric, the tutor of the Emperor Valentinian's son, and a consul of the empire under his former pupil Gratian, was Ausonius,[1] a Christian imitator of the pagan panegyrists, whose taste clung to pagan literature whilst his heart was given to Christianity. We in these days think no shame of mingling the classical mythology of Greece and Rome even with the discussion of things divine. It is inextricably interwoven with our intellectual culture and tendencies, but the use which Ausonius made of it betrays a characteristic hardihood of mind. It was a literary fashion, over which Boileau and Bossuet were to argue with no slight degree of warmth; a literary license which is to be carefully distinguished between a new and an old creed,

[1] 310-394.

whereby, perhaps, some of the early Christians—it may be Ausonius amongst the number—suffered themselves to be seduced.

Ausonius was also a poet, and he celebrates in verse the great cities of antiquity. His *Ordo Nobilium Urbium* enumerates the glories and the industries of Rome, Constantinople, Carthage, Alexandria, Antioch, Treves, thus placing sixth in his list the Roman city on the Rhine, where the emperors had long preferred to hold their court, which contained an extensive manufactory of armour, and which was the great foreign emporium of English woollen goods. His tenth city is Arles, and Toulouse, the fourteenth, is succeeded by Narbonne and Bordeaux. His description of Arles is interesting. He calls it the Lesser Rome of Gaul, which received the commerce of the world. Bordeaux he describes as *insignis Baccho*. Aquitaine he vaunts as a district famous for its elegant and polished manners. In fact, the south-west of Gaul was the fostering home of letters, and Ausonius himself addressed thirty copies of verse to as many professors of rhetoric at Bordeaux. The insight which he gives us, here and elsewhere, into the state of learning in Gaul during the fourth century, is such as we cannot afford to neglect. A rescript of Gratian authorises every metropolitan town to elect professors of rhetoric, who were remunerated from the state coffers with twenty-four *annones*, that is twenty times the amount paid to a Roman legionary, whilst the "grammarian" received half that amount. In the royal city of Treves a professor received thirty *annones*, a Latin grammarian twenty, and a Greek grammarian twelve. The work of the grammarian varied from the instruction of children to the delivery of public letters during six hours of the day, or, in the case of one mentioned by Ausonius, to the pursuit of a comparison between the legislation of different countries. The endowment of research was a matter which, by a caprice

of despotism, was as thoroughly provided for in the Dark Ages as in our own more enlightened days.[1]

Ausonius was in addition a dramatist—he wrote the *Play of the Seven Sages.* It is rather a succession of monologues than a drama. The seven sages of Greece are made to appear one after the other, and, after pronouncing a maxim in Greek, expound it in Latin. The author clearly intended his work for public representation, for he describes how his characters advance upon the stage, clad in their cloaks.[2] And, apologising for his actors in the prologue, he says: "Why do you blush, O Roman, in your toga, because these illustrious men appear upon the stage? It is a reproach to us, but it was none to the Athenians, amongst whom the theatre was considered a public meeting-place. . . . So it is in the whole of Greece."

M. Ampère would claim the contemporary play of *Querolus,* the Grumbler, which has been attributed to Plautus, for a Gallic writer. It is certainly not anterior to the third century. It refers to the revolt of the Bagaudes, on the banks of the Loire, and is dedicated to Rutilius, a celebrated Gallo-Latin poet. *Querolus* is a genuine drama, and a piece of spirited character-drawing. If its Gallic origin were well established, it would have demanded at our hands a most careful dissection and discussion.

Amongst the Gallic Christian writers of the fourth century were Paulinus, a poet full of tenderness, a disciple and friend of Ausonius, his correspondence with whom is still preserved, and to whom St. Augustine dedicated one of his treatises; Sulpicius Severus, an ecclesiastical historian of no mean order, though—or rather because—he attempted to give little more than an abstract of his predecessors' voluminous narratives; Martin, a writer of legends and

[1] Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France,* vol. i. ch. 6.

[2] *Palliati in orchestrum prodeunt.*

Christian sagas, and an epigrammatist of whom even the monks of his day had cause to be afraid, and who managed on several occasions to get the better of Satan in argument; Hilarius, bishop of Poitiers, a notable opponent of Arianism, exiled to Phrygia on that account by the Council of Béziers, author of a *Treatise on the Trinity*, and other controversial works; Ambrosius, the champion of Christianity against pagan reaction, as instanced in his discussion with Symmachus, and of morality and ecclesiastical independence against the corrupt presumption of the usurper Maximus, to whom he would pay no open honour or deference; and Cassianus, the anchorite, author of *Institutions of Monasteries*, and a volume of *Collations* or dialogues; Vigilantius, a southern Gaul, who protested against the vow of celibacy, and who has been described as "the Gascon Luther;" and Prosper of Aquitaine, who has left us his biography, a *Chronicle*, a volume of *Epigrams*, and a poem on *Grace*.

Such were the Christians of Gaul who, albeit in a foreign tongue, laid the foundations of French literature; who revealed, as they wrote, many of the same characteristics which are to be discovered in their descendants, and whose works have had their due effect in modelling the style and spirit of the moderns. The struggle and victory of Christianity in Gaul was something more than a struggle of the Gospel against paganism, and of a new morality against the ancient corruption of the world; it was a revendication of the victims of Imperial Rome. For the country, as we have seen, did not accept her faith from the oppressors who had passed her under the yoke, but rather in spite of them. The early confessors of Christianity in Gaul had reason to fear the favour of the emperors and their courts as much as their hatred; the hurt which the Gallic Church received from the one was as great as that which resulted from the other. Nor was Rome the only enemy against whom she had to contend, and against whom

she contended so successfully that, on more than one occasion, Gaul marched in the van of pure and orthodox Christianity. Errors of practice and doctrine assailed her from the East and from the West; Gnosticism, Arianism, Pelagianism, Nestorianism, Eutychism—all of these felt the weight of her independent logic, her intellectual vigour and shrewdness. Nevertheless against one or two, the first two of these encroachments, her arm was destined to prove weak, and her resistance comparatively brief. The pride of knowledge which, in the schools of Alexandria and the East, generated the earliest Christian heresy, had its special temptations for the vainglorious and self-confident Gaul, whilst the legacy of the Greek and Roman philosophies, the Arian tendency towards rationalism—the offspring especially of Platonism and Christianity—proved in the end irresistible to a race which had so eagerly accepted the civilisation of southern Europe. Another enemy had appeared, hardly less formidable, in the oriental idea of monasticism, which, whatever it might have done for Christianity, could not be other than baneful in its effects on the intellect. Against this corruption also the genius of Gallic Christianity maintained a vigorous struggle; and thus, amidst strife and victory, relapse and recovery, the bulwarks of faith and intelligence were sustained until the worldly empire of Rome had passed away, and her ecclesiastical supremacy had begun to assert itself.

Meanwhile the Germans had entered Gaul, driving out the Roman soldiers before them, and three great battles raged side by side upon the soil which has so often been the theatre of the fortunes of Europe. They were the battles of Christianity against the world, of the Gallic Church against pagan philosophy, of Gaul and Rome against the barbarians. Side by side stood three men, so different in their character and their tendencies, representing such varied phases of human history and intellect, as Theodoric the Goth, Salvian the

Christian Gaul, and Rutilius, the last great pagan writer of the Gallo-Romans. Amidst these struggles the Church lost much of her early purity, stooping, but stooping too low, in order to conquer the new masters of Gaul. Rutilius and Salvian alike, from their different points of view, attacked the corruptions of the Christian community; and they were alike in one thing else, that they both attacked them with satire. Rutilius wrote epigrams against the Jews and the monks; Salvian inveighs bitterly against the avarice and decaying faith of his co-religionists. "Thou hast lost," thus he apostrophises the Church in Gaul, "thy indifference to earthly wealth and thy love of heavenly blessings . . . thou hast gained more vices in proportion as thou hast gained more nations . . . the richer thou hast become in numbers, the poorer hast thou become in devotion, at once greater and smaller, in progress and in decay." Amongst the Teutonic invaders there were Christians, the majority of whom had accepted Arianism. In his hatred of corruption, Salvian passes lightly over this error of belief. "They are heretics," he says of the barbarians, "but they know it not; with us they are so, but not with themselves. They think themselves catholic, even accusing you of heresy; the truth is on our side, but they think they possess it; they err, but their intention is right." And again he bears witness to the morality of life amongst the Saxons, the Vandals, and the Goths; contrasting it with the vices of the Romans, not without implication against the professed Christians of Roman Gaul.

§ 4. The Chroniclers.

The life of Sidonius Apollinaris, a native of Lyons, who flourished in the middle of the fifth century, contains a valuable illustration of the action and reaction between Gallic

Christianity and Teutonic barbarism. He married the daughter of Avitus, afterwards emperor, and at the coronation of the latter he pronounced a panegyric in verse before the Roman Senate, which he did likewise for Majorianus and Anthemius. At this time he was a pagan, and yet, within three years of his return from Rome, after his attendance upon Anthemius, he was consecrated bishop. He was not a Roman patrician for nothing. One of his first acts was to condemn the writing of profane poetry, and he abandoned a history of Attila's invasion, which he had already begun. No doubt his conversion was sincere, and his adoption of Christianity conscientious; but he never attempted to throw aside his lightness of heart, his pungency of expression, and his satirical humour. He makes a joke on the subject of fasting; he laughs pleasantly at the notion of praying for rain or fine weather, suggesting that the potter and the gardener might not agree about the matter. Mamertius dedicated to him a refutation of Faustus on the materiality of the soul. Sidonius thanks him in a hundred hyperboles, adding that he knows nothing of the subject in dispute. Nor is he afraid of indulging in pagan illustrations, or of continuing to model his style on that of pagan authors. He is, in fact, the Dean Swift, or better, the Sydney Smith of the Gallic Church.

The centre of his see was Arvernum, now replaced by Clermont, and this town was taken possession of by the Goths. Sidonius displayed the best side of his character in the face of his country's enemies, and maintained the dignity and sanctity of his faith in presence of the invading hordes. His wife's family, the most influential Romans of Auvergne, withstood the Goths for several years; but Sidonius intervened to bring about a truce. This *induciarum imago*, as he calls it, was soon broken; and he writes to Mamertius—"It is rumoured that the Goths are advancing upon the Roman territory. Wretched Arvernians, we are ever the gateway of

invasion." The bishop inspired courage into his people, and appointed days of rogation and prayer, uniting the patriot and the Christian. The Goths retired; but the Arvernians were presently delivered by treaty into the hands of their enemies, in order to stave off the advance upon Marseilles. Exile and imprisonment were the lot of Sidonius; but he was released through the mediation of a friend, and after gaining a certain influence over Erik, king of the Visigoths, who had taken up his quarters at Bordeaux, he was restored to his bishopric, and died there A.D. 489.

The letters of Sidonius, together with other contemporary and later documents, give us a vivid picture of the customs and manner of life in Gaul during the fifth century, from which it appears that the Gallo-Roman civilisation was not by any means contemptible, nor their literary culture insignificant. And the documents in question betray, moreover, that the Christian and pagan communities had by this time approximated in a very remarkable degree, being no longer divided by a sharp line of demarcation, as indeed must have been evident in the very meagre sketch above given of the life of Sidonius. "Great lords, hardly to be called Christians, ex-prefects of Gaul, men of the world and men of pleasure, frequently became bishops. In the end they were compelled to this course, if they wished to bear a part in the moral movement of the age, to preserve any real importance, to exert any active influence." [1]

For example, let us take this letter from Sidonius to Eriphius, the son-in-law of Philimathius, the writer's deceased friend:—

"You are ever the same, dear Eriphius; the hunting-field, the city, the country never attract you so powerfully that the love of letters cannot still retain you. . . . You bid me send you the verses which I made at the request of your father-in-law,

[1] Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, Lect. 3.

that respected gentleman, who, in the society of his equals, was equally ready to command and to obey. But as you wish to know where and on what occasion these verses were made, that you may the better understand this trifling production, blame yourself if the preface be longer than the work itself.

"We had met at the tomb of St. Just,[1] when sickness prevented your being with us. The annual procession had been made before dawn, amidst a vast assemblage of the populace of both sexes, which the basilica and the crypt could not contain, although they are surrounded by immense porches. After the monks and clerks had celebrated matins, singing the psalms alternately with much sweetness, every one withdrew in various directions, though not very far, so as to be ready for the tierce when the priests were to celebrate the divine sacrifice. The narrow dimensions of the place, the crowd pressing about us, and the great number of lights, had suffocated us; the oppressive moisture of a summer night, still recent, albeit cooled by the first freshness of an autumn morn, had yet warmed the edifice. Whilst the different classes of society were scattered on all sides, the principal citizens went and gathered round the tomb of Syagrius, not a bowshot away. Some were seated under the shade of a trellis formed of laths, which were covered by the green branches of the vine; we were reclining on a green lawn balmy with the perfume of flowers. The conversation was pleasant, mirthful, jocular; moreover (which was particularly agreeable), there was no discussion concerning powers or tributes, not a word which could compromise, and not a soul who could be compromised. Whoever could relate an interesting story in apt words was sure to be listened to with attention. Above all, there was no giving of connected narratives, for our hilarity often interrupted our speech. Tired at last of this long rest, we felt a desire to do something. Presently dividing ourselves into two companies, according to age, the first loudly called for a game of tennis, the others for a table and dice. I was the first to make a move for the tennis; for, as you know, I love it as much as my books. On the other hand, my brother Domicius, a man of great elegance and love of sport, got hold of some dice, rattled

[1] The feast of St. Just, a former bishop, was held on the 2d of September.

them, and rapped his dice-box as though he was sounding a trumpet to summon the players to him. As for us, we had a long game with the scholars, in order to refresh our limbs, numbed by a too long rest, by this healthy exercise. The noble Philimathius himself, as the Mantuan poet says,

Ausus et ipse manu juvenum tentare laborem,

constantly mingled with the tennis-players. He excelled at it when he was younger; but when he had been frequently hustled from the middle, where they stood upright, by the shock of some player running against him; when, at other times, going within the base, he could neither bar the way nor get out of the way of the ball, as it flew before him, or came upon him, and found a difficulty in recovering himself from his falls, being frequently overturned, he was the first to leave the game, panting and greatly heated. The exercise had caused his liver to swell, and he suffered a sharp pain. I stopped shortly afterwards, by way of charitably stopping at the same time as he, and thus relieving our brother from the annoyance of his fatigue. We then seated ourselves once more, and presently his perspiring made him ask for some water to bathe his face. They brought him some, and with it a plate bearing a napkin which had been washed over night, and happened to be hung upon a rope stretched over a pulley, before the folding-doors of the porter's cottage. As he was slowly drying his cheeks, he said: 'I wish you would dictate for me four verses on the article which I am making use of.' 'Done,' I replied. 'But,' he added, 'let my name be included in the verses.' I answered that what he asked was feasible. 'Well,' he rejoined, 'dictate then.' Whereupon I said, smiling, 'But, you ought to know that the muses will take it ill if I attempt to mingle in their company amongst so many witnesses.' Then he replied smartly, and yet with courtesy (for he was a man of spirit and inexhaustible wit), 'Rather take heed, my lord Solius, that Apollo is not still more irritated if you seek to seduce in secret and apart one of his dear pupils.' You may imagine the applause excited by this quick and well-turned reply. Then, without delay, I called his secretary, who stood by with his tablets in his hand, and dictated to him the following quatrain:—'Another morning when he leaves

his hot bath, or when the chase has heated his brow, may handsome Philimathius still find this linen to dry his dripping face, so that the water may pass from his brow into this fleece as into a drinker's throat.' Hardly had your Epiphanius written these verses when we were told that the hour had struck, and that the bishop was leaving his house, and we rose at once."

Of such a nature were the recreations of a bishop—and possibly enough Sidonius was not the only bishop in that company—in the fifth century; and the picture is full of suggestions and outlines that may easily be filled in. One thing is manifest, that the aristocracy of Gaul had for the most part become transferred from the civil to the religious community; or, at least, that the Christian Church comprised within itself a genuine aristocracy, not only of wealth but of learning, accomplishments, and manners. There were of course men of influence and culture in the army, and in the highest offices of the State; and of these, no doubt, many were pagans. But it was within the pale of the church, and occasionally in the still greater security of the monasteries, that the Gallic literature of this period mainly sought refuge, and that particularly when there ceased to be a Roman court in Gaul. It has been the same in every country. Learning has saved itself from suppression by its marriage with Christianity, and the church has been the patron and the foster-mother of that very culture which began by despising her. It is true that a partial separation has since become necessary, when the danger of obscurantism on one hand, and scepticism on the other, made both a little shy of their mutual intimacy; but neither Literature nor Christianity could have dispensed with the interchange of benefits which has resulted from their communion.

It is to be observed that the pagan classical literature disappeared rapidly at the time of which we speak; and this under a double discouragement. The Teutons had little or

no taste for Greek or Latin authors, and rarely cared, even in France, to learn the Greek or Latin language. The Christians who had been converted from paganism either resigned their classical studies, or refrained from urging them upon others; whilst Christians born into the Church found little encouragement to become acquainted with any literature save that of the inspired writers, the fathers and the doctors of Christianity. It is true that the two ancient languages of southern Europe became, and remained for many centuries, the universal languages of the Church; and by virtue of this adoption, they became the medium for such extraneous literature as was permitted to emanate from within her pale. The inhabitants of the monasteries, for instance, were originally all laymen, and they were free from many of the restraints which held the intellect of the ecclesiastics in a narrow groove. Hence it is from the monasteries chiefly that most of the early secular history and poetry proceeded; and it was in the schools of the monks that the most liberal education was to be obtained. The Teutons themselves, before they had adopted Christianity to any large extent, rarely built or supported schools; whilst the Church, though it never failed to establish seminaries in connection with every bishopric, if not with every important centre of worship, did so in the first place mainly for the training of her own priests, or of those who were in any capacity to take part in her services. Nevertheless, we do not wish to imply that the study of pagan antiquity entirely ceased. There can have been but few literary pagans in the sixth century; but at all events there were professed philosophers, after the ancient Greek and Latin schools of philosophy; and it was probably in the monasteries that these relics of the learning of the old world found their asylum. Thus, in fact, was preserved in the darkness of these Ages the savour of knowledge which was to form the basis of modern intellectual regeneration.

Forty years after the death of Sidonius was born Gregory, bishop of Tours;[1] and his famous *Ecclesiastical History of the Franks* makes us acquainted with much concerning the progress of letters, and the reactions of religious and civil society, of which we should otherwise have remained in ignorance. He also, like Sidonius, belonged to a patrician family, counting amongst his ancestors both senators and bishops. His uncle was bishop of Arvernum, and he had given his nephew a liberal education. Gregory obtained, at all events before his death, an acquaintance with Virgil, Sallust, Pliny, and Aulus Gellius; but he takes care expressly to guard himself against being thought to admire them too strongly, or even to imitate their style. He prides himself on being rough and straightforward in his manner of writing; departing thus, to a certain extent, from the genius of his race, and affording an apt illustration of the opposition between Christian and pagan literature, to which reference was made above. At the same time he was a historian by choice and by fact, and not a theologian; and though he calls his history ecclesiastical, the bulk of it is secular. Yet Gregory appears to have been a sincere Christian, as well as a blunt and obstinate Gaul. He stood like a rock against the encroachments of the world upon Christianity, as well as against the overbearing conduct of the Frank and Gothic kings, towards all who appealed to him for protection. He was a general of the Church militant in Gaul. When the young Merovig sought asylum with him, he held him safe against the wrath of Chilpéric and Frédégonde, without losing the respect of either. He himself relates an anecdote which displays at once his bluntness and courage in the face of those who had the power to crush him, his obstinacy in argument, and his want of skill in intellectual fence.

Chilpéric, grandson of Clovis, set up as a poet and as a theologian. He was distinguished in the one accomplishment

[1] 539.

by his false quantities, and in the other by his Arianism; but Gregory, who hated the Arians, and who had flatly disobeyed the behest of Frédégonde to drive Merovig out of his church, on the plea "that one must not do under Catholic kings that which was not done under Arian kings," did not shine in his arguments with Chilpéric. The latter objected to speak of the persons of the Trinity. "You," he said to Gregory, "and the other doctors have taken that view." Gregory discussed the subject warmly, and adduced Hilarius and Eusebius as authorities on his side. But Chilpéric was too strong for him, proving on the spot that those two writers did not agree on the question. Whereupon the stubborn bishop declared that "one must be mad to think so." And Chilpéric grumbled and was silent.[1] The Gallic Church had made its mark before this became possible.

Gregory withstood Chilpéric and Frédégonde, in the name of the Church, in far more critical circumstances, and with greater success. The king imagined that Pretextatus, bishop of Rouen, had brought about the marriage of Merovig and Brunhild, and he summoned him to Paris before a council of Gallic bishops. Gregory defended the accused, and did not stint his arguments against the flattery of the king, the bribes of the queen, or the subservience of his fellow-bishops. But Pretextatus was cowed; he admitted his offence, and craved Chilpéric's pardon. Then Chilpéric "prostrated himself at the feet of the bishops, and said, 'Hear, most pious bishops! The guilty one has confessed his execrable crime.' Then we wept, and raised the king, and he ordered Pretextatus to leave the Church. He himself withdrew to his residence, and sent to us the books of the canons, whereto had been added a new part, containing those which are called apostolic, wherein are these words: 'The bishop convicted of homicide, adultery, or perjury, shall be deprived of his see.' . . . After that the king

[1] Freudens siluit.

demanded, either that his (Pretextatus') gown should be torn, or that we should read over him the 108th Psalm, containing the curses against Judas Iscariot, or that we should sign a judgment to deprive him for ever of communion. I refused all these conditions, in view of the king's promise that nothing should be done contrary to the canons. Then Pretextatus was carried out before our eyes, and delivered over to the guards. Having attempted to escape during the night, he was severely beaten, and exiled to an island near Coutances."[1] On this an eminent French historian[2] remarks, "The idea of a rule raised above the unfettered passions which disturb the barbarian community exists nowhere but in the Church."

Amidst the dark chronicle of bloodshed and crime which Gregory has transmitted to us, we obtain little evidence of light or of intellectual promise beyond that which is revealed in the history of the Church. There are not wanting, however, certain indistinct evidences of a literary influence exerted by the Teutons over their Gallic subjects, which may fairly supplement what we have said on the same topic in the previous chapter. Gregory mentions several legends and songs which can be traced to an older German source. Such is the story of Ermanric,[3] and the circumstances of his murder, for which a precedent may be found in the Lay of Hamdir;[4] the battle of Theodoric with the Thuringians, when the corpses of the slain choked the bed of the river, so that the king's army marched over the palpitating human bridge —significantly reminding us of an episode in the Nibelungen Lied; the account of Clovis seeking a ford over the Vienne, and discovering it by the sight of a crossing stag—which is related also of the Huns, on their advance upon

[1] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, book v. 19. [2] M. Ampère.

[3] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, book iii. 7.

[4] See in *The Edda of Sæmund the Learned*, ed. Thorpe, part ii. 141, "The Lay of Hamdir."

Rome. So again of the legend of Basina, queen of Thuringia, who left her husband for Childéric, feeling him to be the most valiant of kings. Here indeed we have a legend which has been many times appropriated, not only in Germany, but in the case of the Amazon queen who offered herself to Alexander, and, later again, of Agnes Sorel, who said to Charles the Seventh that she must needs love the strongest king in Christendom, and, as it was not he, she would seek him in England.

A contemporary of Gregory, Fortunatus,[1] who passed some years in Chilpéric's court, and wrote verses in honour of Siegbert, Brunhild, and Frédégonde, had known Boethius in Italy, and had profited by the encouragement shown to letters by Theodoric the Goth. He fled from Italy, his native country, before the invading Lombards, lived for some time in Austrasia, and finally settled at Poitiers. He had travelled much for a man of his time; and his *impressions de voyage* crop up here and there in his writings. But, for the most part, he was a panegyrist in verse, exhausting the vocabulary of flattery on behalf of the cruel northern kings, whom he cannot but have hated and despised. Radegonde, having fled from the violence of her husband Clotaire, had founded a convent at Poitiers. With her and with the abbess Agnes, Fortunatus contracted what seems to have been a purely spiritual and intellectual intimacy. Based upon common tastes and mutual respect, the communion of these three—for it does not appear to have included a fourth—was adorned by a literature of its own. The best and most imaginative poems of Fortunatus are those which he addressed to his mother and sister. Nor was his influence on the barbarians who surrounded him inconsiderable. "To the fortune of a tranquillity unique in that age, the Italian exile added that of a fame which was not less unique; and indeed he might well deceive himself as to the durability of that expiring literature

[1] Died about 609.

of which he was the last representative. The barbarians admired his slightest utterance, and did their best to enjoy his flashes of wit. The most meagre productions, letters written as he stood, whilst the messenger waited, simple couplets improvised at a meal, passed quickly from hand to hand, were read, copied, committed to memory. His religious poems, and copies of verse, addressed to the kings, attracted public attention."[1] And with him, the literature which had its foundation in the reminiscences of the Latin classical writers, died; and the age of the sacred legends began. Of course there had been legends in the Church from its earliest days; legends written to be read during divine service, or on the celebration of the saints' days, or even during an ordinary feast. But hitherto they had been overshadowed—or at least in our eyes they are overshadowed—by the works of the panegyrists, the poets, the historians, and the doctors; from the seventh century onwards they stand almost alone as the representatives of French literature. The Church, too, must have its literature; semi-profane, more attractive to the multitude than the sacred text and its commentaries; and this literature was found in the lives of the saints. No art or device of imagination was neglected by the writers who composed these holy legends, or by the ecclesiastics who availed themselves of them; and it would be a matter for surprise if we did not find them charged from beginning to end with miracles. Here also the romances of the Teutonic race found occasional welcome; for when once fiction is called in to the aid of fact, the less imaginative a writer happens to be, the more naturally will he have recourse to ideas already shaped and moulded. One hero of Germanic story, Walther of Aquitaine, is imported bodily into the lives of the saints. A certain legend relates how the valiant warrior, tired of his many exploits, withdrew to a monastery to spend there the

[1] A. Thierry, *Histoire des Gaulois.*

remainder of his days; but the monastery being attacked by lawless men, the remembrance of his old valour returns to him; and he seizes the sword in defence of himself and his friends. Little as there is of literary value in these legends of the Church, they have not been without their effect on modern literature; for they have suggested and inspired some of the noblest productions of every succeeding age.

§ 5. Charlemagne, his Labours and his Fellow-workmen.

The history of France in the eighth century reveals a figure of greater prominence and importance than any of those upon whom we have been turning our attention. Karl the Great, commonly called Charlemagne, was the son of Pepin the Short, and grandson's son of Pepin of Héristal, an Austrasian Mayor of the Palace, who, after the battle of Testry, was acknowledged as Duke of the Franks. Charlemagne, born A.D. 742, succeeded his father in the kingdom of Neustria in 768, obtained the kingdom of all the Franks three years later, and the crown of Lombardy in 774; assuming the title of Emperor in the year 800. At the time of his death, in 814, his dominions were bounded by the ocean from north of the Elbe to the Pyrenees (always excepting Brittany). From the Bidassoa the boundary line ran across north-eastern Spain to the mouth of the Ebro, and thence followed the sea-coast to a point some miles south of Rome. Crossing Italy, it skirted the Adriatic as far as southern Dalmatia, and leaving Bulgaria on the east, ran westward round the Carpathians, and so north by Magdeburg to Jutland. Over this wide domain his sway was, throughout the latter part of his reign, undisputed; and his authority, due as much to his commanding personal characteristics as to his success in arms, was superior both in kind and degree to that of any contemporary sovereign. He

did for France what Alfred did for England, but he was greater than the English king in the field, more influential in the court, and, let us add, more fortunate in the biographer who has transmitted his fame to succeeding generations.

Einhard (Eginhard),[1] who describes himself as "a barbarian little versed in the tongue of the Romans," was a chronicler endowed with something of the spirit of the panegyrists; but his *Life of Charlemagne* may be taken, with discrimination, as a valuable narrative of the acts of his illustrious patron; whilst it is undoubtedly superior in this respect to the spurious *Chronicle of Turpin.* Eginhard describes Karl the Great as tall of stature, with light hair, large and sparkling eyes, a rather long nose, a smiling and agreeable countenance, and very captivating manners. He was fond of war, and seems to have had little difficulty in collecting large and numerous armies, whom he almost invariably led to victory. He governed his court and his empire with remarkable skill. Twice a year, in spring and in autumn, he called together general assemblies, some consisting of the great officers and influential men in Church and State, together with men of inferior position; others being open to the superior class alone. The object of these assemblies was to deliberate and decide upon matters of national or local interest; and their results were preserved in the form of *Capitularies,* which, first instituted by Pepin the Short, contain rather the decrees and decisions than the legislation of the Carlovingian kings and their assemblies. Of these there are some hundred and fifty extant, whereof upwards of sixty belong to the reign of Charlemagne. The subjects dealt with in these Capitularies, which doubtless had all the force of a formal deposition of law, vary considerably from questions of morality to questions of politics, from penal and civil edicts to religious ordinances, and to regulations of domestic and social life.[2] By

[1] Born about 770. [2] Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France,* Lect. 21.

such means as these he held together and attempted to consolidate his widespread dominions, and made every province feel and acknowledge the validity of his sway. Not satisfied with a mere centralisation of his power, backed and supported by the tenor of his military authority, he maintained personal relations with all his principal subjects; making his individuality weigh, through them, upon the most distant corners of his empire. Thus he strove, and with some success, to weld his Franks, Saxons, Avars, Goths, Italians, Aquitanians, Gauls, Iberians, into one homogeneous and harmonious nation; and, if he failed, it was because the task was an utterly impossible one; not because he omitted anything which a cultivated barbarian of the eighth century could have found to do.

It is interesting to note in what manner the individuality of Charlemagne impressed itself upon those with whom he came in contact. In one respect, that of clothing, he was himself an imitator of the original inhabitants of Gaul; for his dress, as Eginhard describes it, partook both of the Frank and Gallic fashion. His long white or blue cloak hung over his shoulders, closed as far as the loins, where it separated into two parts, the one falling over the knees, the other and longer one flowing behind. The legs were clothed in cloth hose, laced down the sides, with trousers of the same material. Beneath the cloak was a tunic, edged with silk; and beneath that a shirt of linen. A belt of gold or silver encircled the waist, from which hung, in its sheath of gold, the famous sword Joyeuse, which the troubadours of later days loved to celebrate, and which, like the Excalibur of King Arthur, boasted a fabulous origin. Over his shoulder Charlemagne was wont to wear a short mantle of marten or other skin; a garment differing from the favourite adornment of his humblest subjects only in the costliness of its material.[1]

The Emperor's courtiers were not slow in imitating and

[1] B. Haureau, *Charlemagne et sa cour*, ch. i.

even surpassing their master in the richness of their attire; and Charlemagne, disliking their ostentation, took an opportunity of effectually reproving it. One day he attended mass in an old cloak of sheepskin; and, as soon as the service was over, said to his attendants: "Let us not rust in idleness, but now, clad as we are, without returning to our houses, let us go a-hunting." There was no shirking such an invitation; so they mounted at once, and followed the Emperor. The sky was laden with rain, which presently fell in heavy showers. The courtiers were all clad in the best robes and gewgaws which the Venetian merchants had been able to supply. Some had their breasts covered with gay silks, set off by plumes of many colours, by peacock's feathers, and the heads and breasts of birds imported from Phœnicia. Others had robes of Tyrian purple, bordered with a fringe of cedar bark. Others wore quilted silks and cloths, or furs of every degree of value, from that of the dormouse to that of the marten. Charlemagne kept them at their sport throughout the day, until their dresses were completely soaked with rain, and torn to rags by the branches, the brambles, and thorns of the underwood. Nor did this end their unpleasant ordeal; for the Emperor commanded that they should attend his court on the following morning, attired precisely as they appeared on returning from the chase. He himself set the example by donning his sheepskin; and thus bantered at his ease the shamefaced counts and marquises who surrounded him.[1]

But our present concern with Charlemagne is not so much to recognise in him the conqueror, the imperial ruler, or even the administrator. It is of more interest that we should know him as the patron of art and science, the encourager of learning, himself a student and the friend of students. A man of war from his youth, he seems to have always nursed a sincere admiration for those who had conquered the difficulties of the

[1] See Teulet, *Œuvres complètes d'Eginhard*, vol. i. p. 32.

mind, as he had mastered the force and courage of his enemies. In one of his many expeditions he found himself, in Italy, in the presence of a number of learned men; probably from Rome, or Pisa, or Bologna; and, after listening to them, and treating them with great respect, he prevailed on several to return with him. He established schools, and monasteries to which schools were attached, in many parts of his dominions; and settled lecturers, professors, artists, grammarians, wherever it occurred to him that their talents might be used to the best account. He also employed architects and engineers to erect places of worship and of education, or to build bridges and lay down roads. In this encouragement of learning and art, as in social life, Charlemagne succeeded, manifestly through his personal influence, through the contagion of his own enthusiasm, by co-operation rather than by command, by example rather than by direction. He learned to read and write long after he had reached the prime of manhood; and all who wished to please their august master by treading in his steps felt no shame in sitting with him at the feet of his instructors. He coveted for himself the fame of a writer, and ordered a grammar of the national tongue to be written.[1] Whether or no this can be taken to imply that he began to write with his own hand, or by dictation, a treatise on the Frank language, it would be sufficiently to the credit of Charlemagne if he had done nothing more than suggest such a work to one of his friends.

A certain anonymous chronicler reports a story, reproduced by M. Guizot, which at least bears on its face the marks of probability. Returning from a long absence, Charlemagne summoned the pupils of one of the schools, and desired to see evidence of their application to study. The children of the poorest parents acquitted themselves

[1] Eginhard, *Vita Carolis Imperatoris*, c. xxix.; "inchoavit et grammaticam patrii sermonis."

well, whilst the better-born had nothing to show but a few mediocre attempts. Charlemagne set the former on his right hand and the latter on his left; and, turning to the poor children with a beaming face, said: "My children, I praise you very much for your zeal in fulfilling my desires, and for seeking your own welfare by all the means in your power. Strive to attain perfection; then I will give you rich bishoprics, splendid abbeys, and I will always esteem you as men worthy of consideration." Turning next, with marks of anger, to those whom he had placed on his left, who stood in terror at his wrathful look, he addressed them with bitter irony: "As for you, sons of the chief men in this nation, you delicate and well-born children, you resting content with your birth and your fortune, you have neglected my orders, and the pursuit of your own fame in your studies, and chosen to abandon yourself to softness, play, idleness, or vain occupations." Then, raising towards heaven his majestic head and his invincible arm, he cried in a voice of thunder: "By the King of the heavens, let others admire you; I, for my part, make no account of your birth and your beauty. Know, and keep it well in your minds, that if you are not urgent to make up by constant application for your past negligence, you shall obtain nothing from Charles."[1]

Amongst the schools which owed their foundation, or rather restoration, to the enlightened Emperor at the close of the eighth century, was that attached to the palace, which some have chosen to consider as the origin of the famous University of Paris. No doubt when a University of Paris was formally established in the thirteenth century, the capital was already one of the principal seats of learning in the kingdom, and schools existed there with some sort of definite endowment; but this is all that can safely be said. In any case Charlemagne did establish from the very best materials

[1] *Des Faits et Gestes de Charles le Grand*, book i.

at his command this school of the palace; not assigning to it, in the first instance, any public building or fixed location, but entertaining its professors and learned men as his own guests, who travelled from place to place with his court, and only settled down in Paris as their permanent home when Charlemagne finally took up his abode in Aix-la-Chapelle. The names of his assistants in the grand work of the restoration of learning, and in particular of those who were attached to his person, sufficiently attest the penetration, the good fortune, the success with which he attracted to his side men of genuine intellectual power, well fitted to be the instruments of his far-sighted purposes. Of these the principal was Alcuin, who had presided over the famous school connected with the monastery of York. On his return from Rome, in 781, whither he had been sent to fetch the *pallium* of the newly-consecrated Archbishop Eanbald, he met Charlemagne at Parma, and was induced by the Emperor to come to Paris, in the capacity of his instructor and counsellor. Here Alcuin employed his time in revising sacred manuscripts, in collating texts of the Holy Scriptures, and generally, in presiding over the great educational movement which his patron had inaugurated. He had, amongst his immediate pupils in the palace school, not only Charlemagne himself, but his children, Charles, Pepin, Louis, Gisla; his sister Gisla; Riculf and Rigbold, afterwards archbishops of Mayence and of Treves; Adalhard, Angilbert, Flavius, Damoëtas, and Eginhard, friends and counsellors of the Emperor; Gundrade the sister of Adalhard, and Richtrude a nun.[1] There are extant a number of letters which Alcuin wrote to Charlemagne during their temporary separations, and from the different places where the first was engaged in the labours which he had undertaken. In one of these, written from Tours—where the Emperor had given him the abbey of St. Martin—he gives his patron an account of what he had been

[1] Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, Lect. 22.

doing in that town for the school attached to the abbey. He says—

"I, your Flavius, according to your exhortation and wise desire, have been busy under the roof of Saint Martin, in dispensing to some the honey of the Holy Scriptures. Others I strive to inebriate with the old wine of ancient studies; these I nourish with the fruit of grammatical knowledge; in the eyes of these again I seek to make bright the courses of the stars. . . . But I have need of the most excellent books of scholastic learning, which I had procured in my own country, either by the devoted care of my master, or by my own labours. I therefore beseech your majesty that it may please your wisdom to permit me to send certain of our household to bring over into France the flowers of Britain. . . . In the morning of my life I sowed in Britain the seeds of knowledge; now, in the evening, although my blood has grown cool, I do not cease to sow them in France; and I trust that, with the favour of God, they will prosper in both lands."[1]

A couple of years later, Alcuin, having written to Charlemagne an explanation of the terms "septuagesima" and "sexagesima," and having been gently remonstrated with by the Emperor upon his unyielding adherence to his own opinion, rejoins as follows:—"With regard to the injunction which you give me at the close of your letter, in a friendly way, and for my good—that if there be aught needing qualification in my opinion, I should qualify it with humility—I thank God I have never been obstinate in my error, nor confident in my disposition. I can advance with ease to a better counsel, for I know how it has been said that one ought more frequently to employ one's ears than one's tongue. I therefore pray your wisdom to think I write not as to a disciple but as to a judge, and that I address to him my humble thoughts, not as to one who is ignorant, but as to one who may correct." A pleasant

[1] See Guizot's *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, for specimens of Alcuin's lessons, and of many of his letters.

touch of nature on both sides, doing credit to the independence of each, at the same time that it betrays the assertion and the recognition of Charlemagne's imperious character.

Two of Alcuin's fellow-workmen were from Ireland; the monkish chronicler of St. Gall describes them as "duos Scotos de Hibernia." They seem to have come of their own accord, and to have conceived the idea of pressing upon France the learning of which they felt her to be in need, and which they felt themselves capable of imparting. It was their custom for some time to collect a crowd about them, much in the same way that is now practised by a mountebank at a fair. "If any one wishes for knowledge," they would proclaim, "let him come to us and take it, for we have it on sale." Charlemagne gave them a welcome at his court. Clement, one of them, was a Greek scholar, but he has left nothing behind him, except memorials of the hatred in which he was held by Theodulf, a Spaniard, bishop of Orleans, whom his friends called Pindar, because he was a poet. For some reason or other he had conceived a fierce antipathy to Clement,[1] and called him "Scottus Sotus;" but Clement nevertheless seems to have been a hearty co-operator with Alcuin, and to have commanded the respect of his pupils, if not of all his colleagues. It is possible enough that the Irishman's orthodoxy did not precisely attain the standard of that of a Spaniard.

Another Irishman, greater than either Alcuin or Clement, lived at the court of Charles the Bald (grandson of Charlemagne through Louis le Débonnaire). This was John Scotus Erigena, who has been called the only really learned man of

[1] Theodulf wrote the following Latin verses upon Clement, which bear testimony to his hatred :—

Res dira, hostis atrox, hebes horror, pestis acerba,
Litigiosa lues, res fera, grande nefas ;
Res fera, res turpis, res segnis, resque nefanda,
Res infesta piis ; res inimica bonis.

the Middle Ages. Others of Alcuin's contemporaries in France were Smaragdus, who wrote a Latin grammar; Benedict of Aniane, a terror to evil-living monks; Peter of Pisa, brought by the Emperor from Pavia; Paul the Lombard, who has left behind him a *History of the Lombards*, a *Chronicle of Events* at Metz, and a continuation of the *Abstract of Eutropius;* and Paulinus of Aquileia, a theologian of no little acuteness and independence. Of Eginhard we have already heard something. He was one of Alcuin's pupils, and has left us the most trustworthy account of Charlemagne, having probably been one of the Emperor's chancellors, and subsequently the tutor and chief minister of Lothaire, associated by Louis le Débonnaire in his government. As a man of letters Eginhard was infinitely superior to Gregory of Tours, though as a historian he ranks below him.

It is to be observed that the civilisation of France during the epoch of Charlemagne and his immediate successors, and, in a still more remarkable degree, the learning and literary culture of France, came from men of foreign extraction. The influences of Christianity had been brought to bear upon the nation by modes and instruments for the most part indigenous, but this restoration of learning in the eighth and ninth centuries must be attributed to causes of external origin. "Before Charlemagne almost all the countries of Western Europe were more advanced than France, and it may be said without national vanity such a state of things was a real anomaly in the history of civilisation. Nevertheless so it was in the epoch of barbarism and the decadence of the Merovingians. At that time France was eclipsed by Spain, by Italy, by England. Spain had, in the tenth century, Isidore of Seville. In Italy, after Boetius and Cassiodorus, those latest representatives of antiquity at the moment when antiquity had expired on the threshold of modern ages, two great Popes

arose, Saint Leo and Saint Gregory. Later on, whilst the densest darkness covered Gaul, England produced the Venerable Bede, celebrated by the extent of his knowledge. France had no one to compare with these." [1]

[1] Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. iii. ch. 4.

BOOK II.

FEUDAL SOCIETY.

CHAPTER I.

§ 1. Origin of the Langue d'Oc and the Langue d'Oïl.

The process whereby the Latin tongue gradually became modified into French was slow and ill defined. Our information upon this point, at all events such as is derived from external evidence, is little more satisfactory than that which relates to the superposition of Latin upon the Gallic and Iberian languages which it displaced. But we have sufficient evidence that the Latin spoken in France during and shortly previous to the eighth century was very corrupt.[1] Even in the age of Gregory of Tours, in the sixth century, we have his word for it that it was very common to confound the genders, the government of prepositions, and other grammatical rules. Nevertheless there was of course a method in every modification which did not spring from the mere neglect of ignorant men; therefore they who treat the transition language of the French as a jargon speak without a notion of what it really was.[2]

[1] In 752, for instance, Pope Zacharias found himself called on to decide concerning the validity of a baptism pronounced in these terms:—"Ego te baptizo in nomine Patria, et Filia, et Spiritus sancti." A form of contract of about the same date is couched in the following words:—"Cedo tibi de rem paupertatis meæ tam pro sponsalia quam pro largitate tuæ, hoc est vasa cum curte circumaucta, mobile et immobile. Cedo tibi bracile valente solidus tantus;" and so forth. [2] Littré, *Histoire de la langue française.*

Of the methods which undoubtedly regulated these linguistic changes, one of the most important and manifest was the euphonic law of accentuation. It has been justly said that,[1] "considered in its form as compared with the Latin, and in its origin, I would define French as a language which adheres to the accentuated syllables, usually suppressing the intermediate consonant and the short vowel, which then reconstructs the word according to the euphony demanded by the ear amongst the letters remaining, and which thus establishes its new and distinct accentuation, resting, in a masculine termination, upon the final syllable, and in a feminine termination upon the penultimate." [2]

The influence of the Franks in this respect was, as we have already seen, very slight, being perceived rather in certain additions to the vocabulary than in any organic modification.[3]

It has been asserted that traces of this new-born tongue are to be discovered as early as the sixth century.[4] The fact is doubtful, not because the evidences were not present at that date, but because we possess no literary documents of the sixth century written in the most popular forms of speech then employed.[5] In France, as in all contemporary Christian

[1] Littré, *Histoire de la langue française.*

[2] Bearing this law of accentuation in mind, we may say that the great modifying force of neo-Latin in France was the law of crasis. Many examples will at once suggest themselves. Thus, *sóllicitáre* becomes *soulcier ; ministérium* becomes *mestier ; cogitare, cuider ; cupiditare, convoiter ; securus, seur, sûr ; maturus, meur, mûr ;* and the like.

[3] From them we have such feudal terms as *mall* (*mahal*), *ban* (*bann*), *allen* (*alôd*), *échevin* (*skepeno*), *maréchal* (*marahscalh*), *sénéchal* (*siniscalh*) ; and terms of war, like *haubert* (*halsberc*), *heaume* (*helm*), *guerre* (*werra*), and the like. But, in tracing the rise of the new language, the Teutonic element would scarcely require more than a few passing words of comment.

[4] The Benedictine authors of the *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. vii. p. xxxiii.

[5] There is, however, a fragment known as the *Gloss of Reichenau*, brought to light in 1863, which is at all events as old as the days of Charlemagne, of which a few words may serve as a specimen. Thus we have from the Latin

lands, the Bible has been the handmaid of literature, and has had a large influence on the formation of the modern tongue.

The Latin spoken in the ninth century by the most educated laymen in France—setting aside those who had spent many years in the schools—is exemplified by the well-known oaths of Lewis the German and Charles the Bald, preserved by Nithard, nephew of Charlemagne, in his *History of the Franks*.[1] Here we have evidence both of the extent to which the corruption of the Latin language had proceeded, and of the advance already made towards the modern form of speech. Another and later example is contained in the song of St. Eulalia,[2] preserved by Ordericus Vitalis, one of the earliest fragments of the popular poetry, afterwards so abundant, which centred round the lives of the saints, and which was to give place in the affections of the French people to the songs of the troubadours.

The distinction between the early French of the north and the south must have existed from the very first; and it is necessary, to a proper appreciation of French literature, to

text of the Bible the word *minas*, upon which the gloss given is *manatces*, the modern French *menaces*; and so, *galea*, *helmo* (*heaume*); *tugurium*, *cabanna*, (*cabane*); *singulariter*, *solamente* (*seulement*); *cæmentarii*, *macioni* (*maçons*); *sindones*, *lincioli* (*linceuls*), etc. Brachet, *Histoire de la Langue Française*, p. 34.

[1] The oath of Lewis the German, taken before the army of Charles the Bald in 842, is as follows: —"Pro Deo amur et pro Christian poblo et nostro commun salvament, dist di en avant, in quant Deus savir et podir me dunat, si salvarai eo cist meon fradre Karlo et in adjudha et in cadhuna cosa, si cum om per dreit son fradra salvar dift, in o quid il mi altresi fazet, et ab Ludher nul plaid nunquam prindrai qui, meon vol, cist meon fradre Karle in damno sit." The oath of the French lords of the army of Charles the Bald is as follows:—"Si Lodhuwigs sagrament, que son fradre Karlo jurat conservat, et Karlus meos sendra, de suo part non lo stanit, si io returnar non l'int pois, ne io ne neuls cui eo returnar int pois in nulla adjudha contra Lodhuwig non li iv er."

[2] We give the four first lines only, with the modern French on the other side:—

Buona pulcella fut Eulalia;	Bonne puelle fut Eulalie,
Bel avret corps, bellezour anima	Beau avait le corps, plus belle l'âme.
Voldrent la veindre li Deo inimi,	Voulurent la vaincre les ennemis de Dieu,
Voldrent la faire diaule servir.	Voulurent la faire le diable servir.

notice the principal features of each form of language. As early as the thirteenth century, French writers had observed and commented on this difference. The grammarian and troubadour, Raymond Vidal, in his *La Dreyta Manera de Trobar*,[1] remarks: "The French tongue is best and most suitable for the making of romances, pastorals, and lays; but that of Limousin is to be preferred for making verses, songs, and sirventes."[2] Of course there were various kinds of dialects spoken in different parts of the country long before the thirteenth century; but the exact process by which they attained their first literary form and their geographical limits cannot be satisfactorily explained. It would be as rash to conclude that the Latin tongue gave place to a uniform idiom throughout France, which was subsequently corrupted in different districts, as it would be to suppose that the French of Aquitaine was simply Latin *plus* Iberian, the French of Auvergne Latin *plus* Gaelic, the French of Armorica Latin *plus* Cymric. Yet there is little doubt but that the original tongues of Gaul had their share in directing the several corruptions of the adopted Latin; although the traces of this influence are not much more distinct than the traces of Teutonic admixture. Many causes must have contributed to produce the dialects of Limousin, Gascony, and Saintonge, of Auvergne, Toulouse, Narbonne, of Vienne and Montferrat; and the dialects themselves, in a more or less imperfect form, must have been commonly spoken in the various provinces many years before they became the vehicle of literature. The same thing was happening at the same time—perhaps somewhat later—in England, although under other conditions, and according to more definite or ascertained laws of linguistic development;

[1] "The right way to write poetry."—Guessard, *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes.*

[2] In *Les Troubadours et leur influence sur la littérature du Midi de l'Europe*, M. E. Baret suggests that the romances, lays, and above all the pastorals, are of Provençal origin.

the older continental forms giving way before the popular dialects, out of which the genius of the early writers of romance was to evolve the modern English tongue.

It is certain, as it is of course very natural, that the corrupted Latin of Italy and of Spain ran for a long time side by side with the corrupted Latin of France; that the forms of corruption were frequently identical; and more, that some forms which were in the first instance common to all the neo-Latin tongues, have come to be adopted in one of those countries, whilst they have been rejected in the others.[1] Thus the *lingua romana rustica* was formed between the sixth and seventh centuries. In the latter century we hear of a Life of Saint Faro, written in a popular form of speech, so as to be understood as widely as possible.[2] Paschatius Radbert tells us, in his Life of Adalhard (about 800), that "if you had heard him speak in the common tongue, he uttered his words in pleasantly-flowing periods; whereas if you heard him use the foreign tongues, which they called Teutsch . . . he excelled all others; but if he spoke Latin, then was there no grander diction from the charm of its sweetness. Here we have a mention of three forms of speech, one of which is described as commonly spoken; and being neither Teutsch nor Latin

[1] In Diez's *Introduction to the Grammar of the Romance Languages*, we find "the two Romance dialects of Gaul, the French and the Provençal, have been produced from nearly the same materials; and the characteristics which the former possesses, in common with the Spanish and Italian, are not of a nature to separate it from its neighbour, to which it bears a very intimate relationship. It is conceivable that within certain limitations the same Romance language reigned at one time over the whole of Gaul. This language preserved itself with more purity in the Provençal than in the French, which from somewhere about the ninth century has been separating itself thence by a gradual attrition of its forms." Burguy, in his introduction to the *Grammaire de la Langue d'oïl*, p. 13, says also, "Il est très-probable, grammaticalement parlant, qu'il y eut d'abord dans les Gaules une seule et même langue, avec des nuances diverses toutefois selon les localités. Dès la fin du IXe siècle nous y trouvons deux langues fort distinctes; le *Provençal* au sud, et le *Français* proprement dit au nord."

[2] "Juxta rusticitatem" is the epithet applied.

was evidently the *lingua romana* in use by the majority of Frenchmen. In 813 the Council of Tours directed the clergy to employ the rustic Latin, which we may call Romance, alternately with the Teutsch. The former was, of course, the most widely understood language in France in the ninth century; and as such, it was employed on all occasions when the intelligence of the masses was to be reached. It became divided, as we have seen, into two dialectic families, that of the north being still further subdivided, and comprising one particular form, spoken in the Ile de France, which, as being the language of the capital and the court, was destined ultimately to prevail over all the rest.

The grand distinction observable amongst the dialects of France is that between the north and the south; and for this the geographical separation would alone be sufficient to account. But there were other causes at work, both political and social. The descent of the Norsemen upon the north, during the tenth century, must have produced an immediate effect in modifying the speech of the conquered country; for though the victors doubtless adopted the language of those whom they had to rule, they certainly did not do so without considerably modifying it. They neglected the accentuation, they changed the vowel-sounds,—in particular turning the *a* into *é*, as in *charitat*, charité; and they must, in like manner, have altered the features of the tongue which they adopted in sundry more or less conspicuous modes. The south of France, on the other hand, occupied a few centuries previously by the Visigoths and Burgundians, the most peaceful of all the eastern [1] invaders, became united from the year 879 under Boson, King of Provence, or of Arles, as he was sometimes described; whilst at the end of the eleventh century it was

[1] "Quem si *vulgo* audisses, dulcifluus emanabat; si vero idem barbara, quam *Teutiscam* dicunt . . . præ-eminebat; quod si *latine*, jam ulterius præ aviditate dulcoris non erat spiritus."—*Pertz.*

divided between the Counts of Toulouse and Barcelona. These changes were made without much bloodshed or resistance; and this fact, added to the natural influences of a more southern climate, tended to widen and emphasise the difference between the Provençal language and literature and the heavier and ruder speech of the north. The former has been distinguished by the name of *langue d'oc;* the latter by that of *langue d'oïl.*[1]

Between the more warlike, yet the more barbarous, Frenchmen of the North and the softer yet more ingenious Frenchmen of the South, there arose a certain rivalry and jealousy, which has been manifested in the political history of subsequent generations; and which has left its marks upon the social history and literature of the Middle Ages. When, in the year 1006, Constance, daughter of the Count of Toulouse, came to be given in marriage to Robert the Second, King of France, and brought with her certain of her father's courtiers, the rude men from the North were scandalised by the frivolity of the Southerners. "Their arms," says the chronicler Glaber,[2] "and the trappings of their horses are extremely quaint. Their hair falls barely to the middle of their heads, they shave their beards like players, wear boots ending unbecom-

[1] M. Gérusez in his *Histoire de la Littérature française*, vol. i., p. 5, remarks that "*oc* is evidently the *hoc* of the Latins; *oïl*, of which we have formed our *oui*, which is certainly not, as has been said so often, the past participle of the verb ouïr, is derived, by a double syncope, from *hoc* and *illud*, united and abridged. *Hoc* was pronounced *o*, as *oc* is still pronounced in the south of France. *Illud* has given its first syllable, upon which the tonic accent rests, and our fathers had thus for affirmation the dissyllable *oïl*, which is wrongly written and pronounced *oil*. The Italians took for a similar use the adverb *sic*, of which they made *si*. Italian is the language of *si*, just as the romance from the south is the language of *oc*, and that from the centre and the north of France the language of *oïl*."

[2] Raoul Glaber, a monk who died towards 1050, in the monastery of Cluny, wrote a *Chronique*, which contains the most memorable events from 900 until 1046. A translation of this chronicle has been published in the collection of *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de France*, edited by the late M. Guizot.

ingly in a curved beak, short skirts down to their knees, and open behind and before. They never walk without springing. Perpetual wranglers, they never act in good faith. And these are the frightful models which the princess has unfortunately offered to Frenchmen, the most honest and refined of all nations!" The picture is one which bears on its face the stamp of truth; and the French literature of the Middle Ages is marked by the same contrast as their social history.

We pass on to consider the nature of this literature, as it sprang to life in the eleventh century; when the pure Latin tongue was no longer spoken, when the labours of Charlemagne and Alcuin had almost ceased to bear fruit, save in the monastic schools, and when the whole of western Europe stood upon the verge of a new historic epoch. And we will begin with the literature of the *langue d'oc*, the literature of the south of France.

§ 2. The Langue d'Oc and its Literature.

The language of the South, distinguished from its greater propinquity to Rome as the *langue d'oc* (*hoc*), was spoken generally up to the close of the thirteenth century on the banks of the Ebro and of the Po, on the Mediterranean coast, and in the districts drained by the Loire and the Rhone. Its principal variations were the dialects of Provence, Gascony, Catalonia, and Piedmont; the latter comprising elements which account for its development into the modern Italian, whilst the Catalan dialect tended towards the modern Spanish. In the twelfth century these four forms were sufficiently similar to be intelligible over the whole district just defined, and even by the more cultivated speakers of the *langue d'oïl*. Many of the troubadours employed the several dialects indiscriminately, and we shall find them frequently combining the features

of all in the same song. Although we are concerned now simply with the literature of France, it is well to bear in mind that this brilliant lyric poetry of the Middle Ages belongs virtually to at least three nationalities, and that the political aspect of the country of the *troubadours* was considerably more varied than it is in the present day.

South of the Pyrenees were the kingdoms of Navarre and Aragon, independent and compact. During the greater part of the twelfth century Aragon held Provence as a fief, until, in 1196, the latter was made over to a younger brother of the reigning king, and from his successor it passed into the hands of the Capets. Provence lay on the Mediterranean, between the Alps and the Rhone. Its neighbour on the north was the duchy of Savoy; on the west, extending between the Rhone and the upper Garonne, and between the Pyrenees and the mountains of Auvergne, was the Count of Toulouse, whereof the ruling family was closely allied, by successive marriages, with the royal house of Aragon. Westward of Toulouse, in the south-west corner of France, came the Duchy of Gascony, including Béarn in the south, Périgord in the north, Albret on the west, and Agenois on the east. North of Gascony and Toulouse was the extensive duchy of Aquitaine, comprising Auvergne, Limousin, Poitou, and La Marche. All these French provinces paid fealty to the French king who reigned in Paris, though they preserved a certain amount of independence, at least to the time of Louis IX.,[1] eighth in direct descent from Hugh Capet.

The history of France, and of the south in particular, during the Capetian period is full of interest, and of course it had no little influence on the literature of the *langue d'oc*. In 1095 Pope Urban, assisted by Peter the Hermit, both of them being Frenchmen, preached the first crusade from Clermont in Auvergne. Since the death of Hildebrand, ten years

[1] 1226-1290.

before, the power of the papacy had been declining, and the Emperors of Germany contested the supremacy of the Pontiff, who was moreover continually liable to be thwarted by the headstrong independence of the feudal barons. For these and other reasons Urban determined to make a diversion which should bring him more prominently forward as the head of Christendom, and he therefore took steps to carry out a project which had long found a place in the counsels of Rome. He had well chosen the spot from which to move the hearts of the Christian warriors of France; for it was the adhesion of Bishop Adhémar of Puy and Raymond de Saint Gilles, Count of Toulouse, which assured the success of the crusade. The hatred of the Saracens in Europe stimulated men's enthusiasm against the Saracens of the Holy Land; but it was no doubt rather policy than religious fervour which caused Urban and his advisers to embark upon this important enterprise. And the first fruits of his success was the expulsion of Henry IV. of Germany from Italy by the Norman and Burgundian host which came to crave the blessing of the Pontiff. Amongst the followers of Raymond, who formed the finest army in the whole crusade, were not only his own subjects, but a large number of Gascons, Aquitanians, and Provençals. Although amongst the effects of the crusades must be placed the increased immorality of western Europe, and the enormous strengthening of the hands of the Popes, it is also to be remembered that men were, by their agency, brought more closely together, caste was broken down, feudalism was prevented from degenerating into anarchy, the conditions of serfdom were alienated, and the municipalities, left in a large degree to their own devices, gained in power and authority.

Civic liberties made a large stride in the reign of Louis VII.;[1] and indeed the general immunity enjoyed by southern France from the long and devastating wars which had

[1] 1137-1180.

afflicted each and all of the neighbouring countries had brought, especially to Provence, much prosperity, leisure, and literary culture in its train. The art of poetry, above all, flourished in a remarkable manner, and the central districts of the *langue d'oc* became a veritable land of song. By about the year 1160, Henry of Anjou, Henry II. of England, became master of the greater part of southern France. He had acquired Poitou and Aquitaine by his marriage with Eleanor, divorced wife of Louis; Touraine and Maine had, together with Anjou, been his original patrimony; he had feudal suzerainty over Auvergne; he conquered Gascony, and seized upon Quercy from the Count of Toulouse; but all this had been done with comparatively little fighting, and the country at large was never greatly disturbed by him. The cruel war waged against the Albigenses, wherein the greater part of Languedoc was laid waste, Béziers, Arles, Narbonne, Avignon, were sacked; wherein Pedro of Arragon, an enlightened patron of letters, fell at Muret[1] with 18,000 of his followers, destroyed the delicate literary southern efflorescence; but the records of at least a couple of centuries remain to show the splendour and importance of the epoch.

Striking figures are those who stand prominent in the history of southern France during the thirteenth century. The philosophical Albigenses, whose head-quarters were at Toulouse but who were spread over a wide district, and whose disciples numbered many thousands; the ascetic Waldenses, the "poor men of Lyons," who would not go beyond the Bible for the rule of their faith—these two sects, against whom all the bitterness of orthodox hatred was to be poured forth, alike distinguished for the purity of their life, and alike rejected by the priestly domination of Rome; Folquet, the false and unscrupulous Bishop of Toulouse, himself once a gay and gallant troubadour, who, with his culture of the poetic

[1] 1213.

art, had cast off all the grace and tenderness of humanity; Domenico, canon of Osma, the parent and founder of the inquisition, who baptized his offspring in the blood of a thousand victims, and did more than any one man of his generation for the cause of Roman supremacy; Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse, excommunicated by the Pope,[1] formidable to Rome by the indifference with which he regarded her denunciations of his heretic subjects, weak and vacillating, first resisting the pressure brought to bear upon him, then yielding himself as a tool in the hands of the persecutors; his gallant nephew, the Viscount of Béziers, opposing the emissaries of Rome by word and deed, until his hapless capital was taken by storm, sacked and consumed by fire, the very last of its inhabitants was killed, and he himself, previously lured into the besiegers' camp, done to death by the basest treachery; Simon de Montfort, succeeding to the honours of his victim, taking henceforth the leading part in this cruel mockery of a crusade;—these are figures worthy the skill of a great painter, grouped as they are in lurid light against the dark background which, in the thirteenth century, began to overlay the land of song.

Turn from the theatre of war to the stage of peaceful everyday life, and the actors who first attract our notice are scarcely less noteworthy. "When Monseigneur the Bishop of Cahors," writes a chronicler, "takes possession of his see, the Viscount of Saissac, his principal vassal, ought to await him at the gate of the town bareheaded, his right leg naked, and his right foot in a slipper. He ought to take the bridle of Monseigneur's mule, and lead him to the episcopal palace. While Monseigneur dines, the Viscount ought to wait on him, his head being still uncovered and his right foot naked; and after dinner, the lord of Saissac is to take the sideboard, which must be of silver gilt, and, putting it on a mule, go his way—

[1] 1207.

both mule and sideboard (the value whereof was fixed at three thousand livres) becoming his own in right of his service. It is told of one Bishop of Cahors that he never said mass without a sword or a pair of gauntlets being laid beside the altar. Another ecclesiastic of Provence claimed the right of mixing with the choir in boots and spurs, his sword by his side, and a hawk on his wrist. The Abbot of Figeac was entitled to be led into the principal town of his see by the lord of Montbrun dressed like a harlequin, save that one of his legs should be naked. These ceremonies were not more fantastic than the tricks which knights and troubadours dignified by the name of the proprieties, and the immorality covered by such a grotesque conventionality was as unsatisfactory in the one case as in the other. Gregory VII., writing of France in 1074, says that "law is forgotten and justice trampled under foot. There is no kind of infamy or cruelty, no act, however vile or intolerable, that is not perpetrated with impunity . . . . by sacrilegious, incestuous, and perjured men, who are ready to betray one another for the veriest trifle." The vices described and hinted at by contemporary historians are such as it would, in the present age, be unclean to put to paper. The country of the Albigenses and Waldenses did not escape the general contagion; but we can at least claim for it that it was less corrupt than the remainder of France. The troubadours refined and attenuated vice; they covered it with a delicate fretwork of etiquette and fastidiousness, but, at the same time they repudiated its brutality; they ate the honey of indulgence, but they did not devour the comb. The evils of vice, as of war, singed but did not blacken them; they were the void heart of the flame which, consuming their neighbours, left them comparatively unscathed. Provence was the focus of the lyrical poetry of the *langue d'oc*, and from its troubadours of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries

spring almost every form of lyrical prosody known to modern Europe.[1]

The literature of southern France in the Middle Ages is the more worthy of study, because it was in many ways a revival of the tone and spirit of the culture displayed by the Gallo-Romans of an earlier age. The refinement of the panegyrists, the literary elegance of a Sidonius relived in the words of the modern Aquitanians and Provençals, who inherited the delicate ear and tongue, the fastidious and discriminative minds of the patrician families who so long resisted, but finally accepted and coalesced with, the Visigoths. There can be no question whatever that the poetry of the troubadours was a flower of indigenous growth, matured and brought to perfection by the same developing influences which had nourished the general civilisation of the south, and had accumulated the commercial prosperity and luxury of towns like Arles, Toulouse, Narbonne, Bordeaux. But, if this poetry was indigenous, if it even extended its influence over northern

[1] The troubadours had the *canson* or *chanson*, consisting of from half-a-dozen to a score of stanzas, all cast in the same mould, and invariably ending with a *commiato* or *envoi*, apostrophising the song, and delivering the mission which it was sent forth to fulfil; the more lax and satirical *sirvente*, with lines and stanzas of varying length, the succession of rhymes being similarly optional; the *sonnet*, originally always chanted to the sound of a musical instrument—hence the name, and one form whereof may possibly have suggested to Petrarch that which he definitely adopted; the *ballad*, sung during the dance. With them also originated many whimsicalities of poetry—the *macaronic*, alternating from language to language, either line by line or verse by verse—a style which Dante himself did not disdain to imitate; the *frottola*, a mere amalgam of proverbs and familiar maxims, strung together with rhyme and metre, but with very little reason. They attuned their voices to the *predicansas*, inciting their hearers to the dangers and glories of the crusades; to the *planhs*, or complaints against fate, or the cruelties of their mistresses; to the *tensons*, characterised by the ingenious replies of a pair of lovers; to the *abbas* (*aubades*), the morning songs of nature's beauty and freshness; to the *serenas* (*sérénades*), in which they invited to the tenderness of love. They even attempted, in their *tezaurs* (*trésors*) and *ensenhamens* (*enseignements*) to give expression to what little they knew of the wonders of science, the rules of philosophy, the art of living.

Italy and north-eastern Spain, leaving an ineffaceable mark on the literatures of these two countries, it does not appear that the Provençals modified in any appreciable degree the literature of the north of France. We have heard that Raymond Vidal, himself a troubadour and a grammarian, claimed a "superior authority" for the "songs in the Limousin tongue;" but he did not for a moment pretend that the trouvères were indebted to the troubadours for any part of their inspiration, nor that the *Chansons de Geste* and *fabliaux* re-echoed the spirit of the *canzons* and *sirventes*. Neither is there much ground for attributing any more than a general and necessary influence in succeeding generations to the Provençal models over the literature of northern France. It is true that the criticism of a later age has claimed this superiority and this influence for the south, one writer going so far as to speak of the "transplantation of the taste for Provençal poetry into France" as early as the beginning of the eleventh century. But a more recent examination has brought the conviction that the northern literature was itself also in the truest sense indigenous; that there were, as early as the eleventh century, songs in northern France which had long been popular; and that, on the other hand, Romance epics are to be found in the south which must unquestionably have derived their inspiration from the Arthurian *Chansons de Geste* of the north. It would be very difficult to determine which of the two great branches of French poetic literature in the Middle Ages ought to stand first, either in point of origin or authority, or even literary value. It is perhaps sufficient to acknowledge the beauty, the genuineness, the national importance of each; to observe how naturally each of them was the outcome and representative of distinct conditions of civilisation and history; and to trace, as we proceed, the action and reaction of both upon the later literature of united France.

§ 3. The Troubadours.

We are about to find in the poetry of the Troubadours a reflection of the age which they have made so memorable; and it is well that we should observe in what degree these poets were suited to become the interpreters between their own day and the generations which have succeeded it. It is clear that the song of a troubadour who was himself the lord of a wide estate must differ considerably from the song of a wandering minstrel, whose poetic gift and guitar were almost his sole possessions. We find, indeed, that the troubadours came from every stage and rank of feudal society; and as their habits and experiences greatly varied, so also varies the character of their songs. One of the very earliest of the troubadours was Guillaume IX., Count of Poitiers.[1] Poitou, Saintonge, and Guyenne were especially the homes of noble and wealthy poets, to whom the making and singing of verses was but the recreation of their leisure moments.[2] In Gascony and in Auvergne the gift and the fashion were more largely present; and there the citizens of the towns, the very working-men themselves, were cultivators of the *gaie science*. Thus we find Elias de Barjols,[3] the son of a shopkeeper, towards the middle of the twelfth century, disputing with Geoffroy Rudel, Prince of Blayes,[4] the palm of verse and courtesy. In Auvergne were born Pierre d'Auvergne[5] and Pierre Rogier, sprung from the people, whose names are immortalised by Petrarch in his *Trionfo d'Amore*. Giraud de Borneilh,[6] Bernard de Ventadour,[7] Gaucelm Faydit,[8] were

[1] 1071-1127.

[2] According to Diez, *Introduction to the Grammar of the Romance Languages*, "Poitou, though the home of the ancient troubadours, does not belong to the Provençal dialect. From the time that it belonged to France, 1276, the *langue d'oïl* spread more and more."

[3] 1180. [4] 1140-1170. [5] 1214.

[6] 1175-1220. [7] 1130-1195. [8] 1190-1240.

humble troubadours of Périgord; which at the same time produced the noble-born Canon Guy d'Uisel and his cousin Elias,[1] and perhaps the loftiest genius of Provençal poetry, Arnaud Daniel,[2] who dignified the fashion of verse, and would, if that were possible, have made it the appanage of the refined and learned. But one of the noblest and most warlike troubadours of Périgord, Bertrand de Born, lord of Hautefort, must not be forgotten here. He supported the pretensions of the youthful prince Henry, youngest son of Henry II. of England, to the Duchy of Aquitaine, both by the sword and by his poetry, inciting the Provençal nobles to form a league in defence of the young prince's right. When the latter died he wrote the following touching complaint:—[3]

"If all the sorrow, and tears
And mourning, and grief and regret,
Which men suffer in this sad century,
Were united, they would seem too light
For the death of this young English prince,
Whose loss saddens merit and honour,
And covers with a dark veil
The world, deprived of joy and full of grief.
Sad, and mournful, and full of sorrow
The brave soldiers remain,
The troubadours and the pleasant *jongleurs;*
They have in death a very cruel enemy,
For she takes away from them the young English king,
Compared to whom the most generous seemed miserly.

[1] 1223. [2] 1160.

[3] We give the first couplet in the original, taken from Raynonard, *Choix des poésies des Troubadours*, vol. iv.

"Si tut li do lor e'l plor marrimen
E las dolors e'l dan e'l caitivier
Que hom agues en est segle dolen
Fosson ensems, semblaran tut leugier
Contra la mort del jove rei Engles
Don reman pretz e jovent doloiros
E'l mon escurs e tenhs e tenebros,
Sem de tot joi, plen de tristor e d'ira.

Never for such an evil
Will there be sadness and tears enough . . .
From this cowardly age, full of trouble,
If love goes away, I hold its happiness for deceptive,
For there is nothing which does not turn to suffering.
Every day you will see, that to-day is worth less than yesterday.
Let each look at oneself in the young English king,
Who in this world was the most valiant of the brave:
Now is gone his gentle loving heart,
And (there) remains for our misfortune discomfort and sadness."

De Born continued to wage war against Richard Cœur de Lion, and to write in favour of the Crusades, though rather satirically; finally, when old, and at the end of his career, he became a monk, and ended his days in austerity and penance.[1] He was a power in his time, not on account of his large possessions or of his numerous followers, but on account of his writings, which were like pamphlets, and either satirical, eulogistic, or warlike. Dante gives him a place in his *Inferno*, where Bertrand wanders about without a head, because he had "divided those whom nature had united."

But it was in Provence particularly that the art of the troubadour attained its acme of grace, of courtliness, of subtle and exquisite expression. And the troubadours of Provence were for the most part highly born and delicately nurtured, like Rambaud de Vaquieras,[2] Guy de Cavaillon,[3] the Countess of Die, and other friends and clients of such discriminating patrons as the lords of Orange, the Marquis d'Aupt, the Counts de Vienne and de Forcalquier. The art of poetry was in fact one of the fashionable accomplishments of the time; and it would probably have been taken as a reproach against any man of high position if he could not either compose a song or at least keep a poet attached to his person.[4]

[1] Between the years 1208 and 1210. [2] 1226. [3] 1210.

[4] The troubadours from Provence were also larger in number than those from any other place. M. E. Baret, in his *Les Troubadours et leur influence*

More than one of the English Norman kings prided themselves on the troubadour's fame; and a fragment is extant in which the Emperor Frederic I. sufficiently justified his claim to rank amongst the poets of his day. He happened to meet at Turin Bérenger II., Count of Provence; and after listening to the songs of many of Bérenger's courtiers, he replied to them in the following lines :—

I love the French cavalier,
And the Catalan lady,
And the civility of the Genoese,
And the Castillian courtesy,
The Provençals' singing,
And the dance of Trevisa,
And the shape of the Aragonese,
And the pearl Julian,
The English hand and face,
And the youth from Tuscany.[1]

The war against the Albigenses aroused also the patriotic ire of many of the Provençal troubadours. The *Chanson des Albigeois* was commenced by Guillaume de Tudela,[2] in an ordinary humdrum descriptive metre, but was continued in 1210 by an unknown troubadour, who brought it down until the second siege of Toulouse. His style imitates that of

sur la littérature du Midi de l'Europe, says that 45 troubadours belonged to Provence, 29 to Gascony, 20 to Auvergne, 14 to the Limousin, 14 to Montferrat, 10 to Narbonne, 9 to Toulouse, 8 to Rodez, 8 to Vienne, 4 to Saintonge, and 4 to Béziers.

[1] Plas mi cavalier francez,
E la donna catalana,
E l'onrar del Ginoes
E la court de castellana
Lou cantar provençalez,
E la danza trevisana,
E lou corps aragones
E la perla juliana,
La mans et kara d'angles,
E lou donzel de Toscana.

[2] Born about 1190.

the Carlovingian *Chansons de Geste*; and he sympathises with the victims throughout. Guillaume Figueiras, a tailor of Toulouse, had himself seen Bishop Folquet direct the slaughter of his hapless fellow-citizens, and was converted by the sight into a poet and *jongleur*. He went into Lombardy, and protested with all his might against the cruelty of that eighteen years' war, in terms of the deepest indignation and the most trenchant satire. And was there not room for satire, in an age when the Dominican Izarn could express the spirit of Christianity, then dominant, in a song wherein the priest, essaying to convert an Albigensian heretic, ends every couplet with this unanswerable argument, "Believe as we do, or you will be burnt"?

Jongleurs and *jongleresses*, or *jugleresses*, were perhaps in greater request in the south than in the north; and their skill was exercised not only in singing the favourite songs of dead or absent troubadours, and in accompanying the words on a musical instrument, but also, not unfrequently, in performing sleight-of-hand tricks, standing on their heads, walking on their hands, whirling and catching knives, baskets, copper balls and plates, or putting through their paces the bears and monkeys which accompanied them on their travels. Representations of such feats as these, of which all classes of society in the Middle Ages, from the nobles in their, for that age, luxurious halls to the common people in the public streets, loved above everything to be spectators, are preserved in manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and may be seen by the curious in the British Museum and the Bodleian Library, or in the careful facsimiles of M. Paul Lacroix. A string of dancing fools with their caps and bells, a monkey riding a bear, dogs and monkeys playing the guitar or hurdy-gurdy, performing bears and ponies, *jongleurs* on a stage, with scenery at their backs, going far towards lending a colour to the belief that the drama was

not without its cultivators even in the thirteenth century; such are amongst the pictures of Middle Age life which these ancient documents have preserved for us. As for the social position of the *jongleurs* in the south, it seems to have been much the same as in the north of France, that is to say, at all events no better than that of the wandering acrobats of our own times; whilst their character was, let us hope, not worse. St. Bernard, however, thought differently, for in the middle of the twelfth century he thought it necessary to warn his hearers against them.[1] And yet, without the *symphonie*, the *mandore*, the *monocorde*, the *psalterion*, the *rote* and the *viole* of the *jongleur* and *bateleur*, the troubadour, whose skill ended with his song, would have found it difficult to entertain his audience.

The audience in which a troubadour chiefly delighted was naturally one composed of king, marquis, or count, with the noble ladies and gentlemen of his court, his guests, and attendants. From these he could reckon on meeting the readiest appreciation, and the most welcome manifestations of favour. It happened often enough that the shortest path to promotion lay in pleasing the fastidious ears of such powerful patrons as Richard Cœur de Lion, Guillaume VIII. of Montpellier,[2] Alphonso of Arragon,[3] and Alphonso IV.[4] and Alphonso IX.,[5] kings of Castille, the Viscount Barral of Marseille,[6] the Dauphin of Auvergne,[7] and the Counts of Provence through many generations.

Let us picture to ourselves an evening's entertainment in the castle or palace of one of these wealthy hosts on an occasion of special hospitality and conviviality. After an early meal, the royal or noble entertainer and his more

[1] "Home entendus aux jongleurs asseiz tost averoit une feme que on appelle Pouvreté. Et si il avient que les jeux des jongleurs te pleisent, fayn de les oyr et que aultre part tu penses. Les instruments des jongleurs ne pleisent à Dieu." [2] 1172-1204. [3] 1152-1196. [4] 1155-1214. [5] 1188-1229. [6] 1180. [7] 1169-1234.

honoured guests retire by themselves into a "withdrawing room," an apartment supplied with numerous small tables and couches, brilliantly lighted with a hundred torches, of which the smoke is driven by the draughts, which come through the ill-closing doors or casements, high up in the air. The floor has been newly spread with picked rushes, or, in some cases, with a costly eastern carpet, the walls hung with hangings worked by the dainty hands of the ladies of the house, or purchased at one of the few places where the trade had already begun to flourish. Chess, or cards, or some other game which chanced to be in fashion, occupies an hour or more of time, until the gradual hum of conversation suggests the introduction of a song or a story. One or other of the guests is nothing loth to display his powers of memory or improvisation; and by this means the afternoon is pleasantly wiled away—not, perhaps, without a furtive slumber on the part of more than one of the company—until the time arrives when the host invites his friends to repair to the great hall of the mansion, where a brilliant feast has been arranged for them. Here already are gathered the guests of less distinction, who have in the meanwhile been amusing themselves in nearly the same manner as their superiors. The eating and drinking is by no means effected in silence. Jests, jokes, hearty laughter, add to or drown the din kept up by the waiting men and women; whilst even before the dishes are done with, the guests move from place to place, or throw the dice between every couple of mouthfuls. There is no hurry over the plentiful meal, as, reclining on cushions of many-coloured silk or velvet, the light-hearted ladies and gentlemen prolong their appetite by flirting, or wrangling, or exchanging every kind of jest. And, at a given signal, a well-clad troubadour or *jongleur* enters the hall, and, standing before the long table at which the host is seated, strikes the strings of his instrument, and accompanies himself to many a gay *chanson* or interesting *fabliau*. Hardly

has he completed his task, and discovered a seat where he may attend to the claims of his appetite, than a company of *jugleurs* and *jugleresses* trip into the open space, and at once rivet every eager eye; not, perhaps, completing their show before more than one of the spectators have abandoned themselves to the happy unconsciousness which follows upon an amply-satisfying repast, and an indulgence in the generous wine so frequently handed round from guest to guest.

To many a troubadour, however, the audience which he preferred before all was the one fair lady who was fortunate enough for the time being to arrest his generally fickle fancy. To her he would address his most tender and gracious lays; she would be the inspiration and heroine of his *tensons, aubades,* and *sérénades;* for her he would exert his utmost powers of expression, and attune the sweetest notes of his viol and of his voice. It was a task, often enough, of difficulty and danger; for he had always plenty of rivals busy at the same work, and he would be fortunate if he did not encounter the wrath or revenge of her family or her husband. And yet it would seem that the singers as a rule had the best of it in those days, and in that land of song and sun. Many a fair maiden's heart was won by a gay and gallant troubadour; many an over-trustful man has had the laugh turned against him by the vagaries of his too susceptible spouse. The art of seduction—in its highest and in its lowest sense—was professed, studied, and practised in this condition of society with great zest and skill. Its laws were drawn up and discussed, its refinements occupied the attention of princes, poets, knights, and men of the world; its triumphs were coveted by all classes, and the fair sex in general considered it their highest glory thus to incite and to possess the power of requiting the exertions of their pursuers. It was about the close of the twelfth century that André le Chapelain wrote a Latin treatise *De Arte amatoria, et reprobatione*

amoris. Nostradamus,[1] the first historian of the troubadours, specifies a number of courts and their presidents, by whom judgment was regularly passed in matters pertaining to courtship and love; and although he is far from being a safe guide in questions of literary doubt, he may probably be depended upon as confirming the fact of the existence of some such courts of love as those which he mentions. Describing one form of poetic composition in common use amongst the troubadours, he says: "Tensons were disputes concerning love which took place between cavaliers and poetic ladies, who discussed some fine and subtle question of love; and when they could not agree, they sent, in order to have the matter settled, to illustrious lady-presidents, who held courts of love at Signe (Segni), at Pierrefeu, at Romanino, or elsewhere; and trials were sustained on this topic, which they called *lous arrests d'amour.*" On the names mentioned by Nostradamus, whether of places or persons, we can set very little reliance, and the courts of Love, such as he knew them in the fourteenth century, can have borne but slight resemblance to those which existed in the time of André le Chapelain, before the constitution of chivalrous society had received a fatal shock from the horrors of internecine war. Of the history and processes of these earlier courts we have not much to build upon of an authentic nature; but it is probable enough that they owed their origin to the merely literary competitions which were held and determined in the feudal castles of the great lords of the south.[2] What remains

[1] Died in 1590.

[2] Diez in his essay *Ueber die Minnehöfe* denies the existence of similar Courts and of the Code of Love, but says that such discussions served to while away the time of noble lords and ladies. M. Aubertin, in his *Histoire de la langue et de la littérature françaises au moyen âge*, 1876, is of the same opinion as the learned German. The eminent French historian Henri Martin maintains in his *History of France* that they did exist. Those who wish to know something more on this subject should read *La vie au temps des Cours d' Amour* by Ant. Méray, 1876.

certain is that no document yet brought to light contains a mention of this singular institution as having been in existence previous to the time of the crusades. Is it to the crusades themselves, in that state of things to which Ariosto refers,[1] speaking of the return of the Greeks from Troy, rather than in the simplicity of a literary custom, that we are to look for the origin of the courts of Love?[2] At all events, this institution, like many another in the same epoch, however fantastic it may appear to us on first acquaintance, no doubt served a very useful purpose. It recognised and even sanctioned the equivocal relations of the sexes, but it refined the inevitable evil, substituted an easy for an almost impracticable moral code, and, being compelled to draw a new line between venial offences and coarse licentiousness, exacted a rigid obedience to its laws. The courts of love rescued woman from what would have become a condition of intolerable degradation; it elevated affection rather than passion into the place of honour; it encouraged devotion in the stronger sex, grace and propriety in the weaker; and when a more wholesome state of society succeeded to the fevered period of the crusades, with the institution itself disappeared its worst concomitants, but there remained at all events the developed taste and courtesy for womankind.

The Code of Love which governed the judgments of these courts, whose authority was at least equal, in their own jurisdiction, to those of State and Church,[3] and disobedience to

[1] *Orlando Furioso*, canto xx. 10—

> . . . . che le lor donne alli tormenti
> Di tanta absenzia avean preso remedio:
> Tutte s' avean gioveni amanti eletti.

[2] André himself assigns their origin to Brittany, in the days of the British King Arthur; but manifestly without historic authority.

[3] The courts were held at times by as many as fifty or sixty of the principal ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood, in addition to the president. For many years there was open court at Avignon, within a stone's throw of the residence of the Popes.

which was punished by expulsion from society, is a remarkable collection of legal love-maxims. They are thirty-one in number; and amongst the most significant are these :—"The plea of wedlock is not a sufficient excuse from love. He or she who does not conceal her feelings cannot love. None can be bound by a double love. It is an undoubted fact that love is always being diminished or increased. A two years' widowhood for a deceased lover is enjoined upon the survivor. It is shameful to love those whom it is shameful to desire to marry. A true lover does not desire the embrace of any one save his companion in love. Love rarely endures when made public. Easy acceptance renders love contemptible; a slow acceptance causes it to be held dear. Every lover is wont to grow pale in the presence of his love. At the sudden sight of his love, the lover's heart trembles. Honesty alone makes one worthy of love. A man full of love is ever full of fear. Love can deny nothing to a lover. He who is harassed by too much luxury is not wont to love.[1] There is nothing to prevent one woman from being loved by two men, nor one man by two women."

With a single illustration of the process and judgments of the courts of love, taken from the pages of André le Chapelain, and assigned by him to the year 1174, although its date is probably ten years earlier, we shall pass on to the consideration of Provençal poetry in the specimens which have been preserved of it. To the court of the Countess of Champagne came a certain lady and a count, with a case for decision which they embodied in the following petition :—

"It is proved by old experience that we should look for correct judgment in the neighbourhood where grows the Tree of Knowledge, and that in our necessity we should draw water rather from the brimming fountain than from the failing stream,

[1] "Quem nimia voluptatis abundantia vexat."

since abundance of gifts cannot proceed from dearth of riches. Being one day under the shadow of a tree, discoursing of love and examining its commandments, a doubt arose between us, whether love could exist among the married, or jealousy among lovers. We disputed on this doubt, and supported our respective opinion with arguments; but neither of us would give way. We agreed, therefore, after long contention, to submit it to your arbitration. And we now lay before you our opinions in writing, being firmly resolved to abide by your award, and perfectly confident that the truth will be elicited and speedily determined by your Excellency."

To this petition the countess, after due deliberation with her assessors, made the following reply, couched, like the petition, in the prescribed terms of the courts:—

"Because we are bound to attend to all just petitions, and must not refuse our aid to those who are worthy to receive it—especially to those who err in the articles of love, and require to be directed aright therein—this which you have commended to me by your letter I shall study to bring immediately to a proper termination. Your letter states that between you arose this doubt, whether true love may exist between the married, or jealousy between lovers; and that, having debated the matter in vain between yourselves, you desire that I, who have your arguments before me, may determine which of you is in the right. Therefore, having examined the said arguments by the aid of sound science, we proceed hereby to enact that Love cannot extend his laws between husband and wife, since the gifts of love are voluntary, and husband and wife are the servants of duty; also there can be, in our opinion, no jealousy between the married, since between them there can be no love. For jealousy is the companion of love, as is set forth in the Code of Love, which declares that love cannot exist without jealousy. This is our decision, formed with much deliberation, and with the approval of many dames; and we decree that it be held firm and inviolable."

This was a *cause célèbre* in the courts of love, and was frequently referred to in subsequent decisions; for instance by

Eleanor of Guyenne, afterwards Queen of England, herself a noted president at these courts, when she decided in favour of a gallant who, wooing a lady already engaged, obtained from her a promise to listen to his suit if she should ever find herself at liberty to do so, and who claimed the fulfilment of the promise as soon as the lady had married the man of her choice.

The *chansons, canzons,* or *cansos* were, as a rule, the longest and the most dignified of the songs of the troubadours, who adopted this style in particular when they wished to deal worthily with the praise of God, of religion or morality, or when they would attach a special element of solemnity to their commendation of the object of their affection. The versification usually consists of decasyllabic couplets, though the rhymes occasionally alternate, and, in finished compositions, correspond in the several stanzas, line for line and rhyme for rhyme. *Chansons* of shorter length and less elevated subject acquired the name of *cansonetta* or *demi-chanson;* whereof the following graceful song of Claire D'Anduse,[1] addressed to Hugues de Saint-Cyr, is an example :—

"In grievous trouble and in grievous care
Have (they) plunged my heart, and in great disturbance,
The liars and the false surmisers,
Depressers of joy and youth;
Whereas thee, whom I love more than aught in the world,
They have caused to depart and stay away from me,
So that I can no more see or gaze on thee,
And thus I die of grief, of ire, and of rage.

"He who blames my love for thee, or forbids it,
Cannot cause my heart to improve in any way,
Nor increase the sweet desire I have for thee,
Nor the longing, nor the desire, nor the liking;
And there is no man, however much an enemy he be,

[1] De Sainte-Palaie, in his *Histoire littéraire des Troubadours,* ii. 477, says that this lady troubadour is unknown, and has only left the above song.

If he speak well of thee, whom I do not hold dear,
And, if he speak ill of thee, can say or do to me
Aught which is capable of pleasing me.

"Never, fair friend, give thyself a fear
That I might have a treacherous heart towards thee,
Nor that I could change thee for any other lover
Though a hundred other ladies urge me.
The love which holds me for thee in its keeping
Wills that I save and guard my heart for thee,
And that will I do; and if I could remove
My body, he who has it should never possess it."

[1] "En greu esmai et en greu pessamen,
An mes mon cor et en granda error,
Li lauzengier e'lh fals devinador,
Abayssador de joy e de joven,
Quar vos, qu'ieu am mais que res qu'el mon sia,
An fait de me departir e lonhar,
Si qu'ieu no us puesc vezer ni remirar,
Don muer de dol d'ira e de feunia.

"Selh que m blasma vostr' amor ni m defen
Non podon far en re mon cor mellor,
Ni' dous dezir qu'ieu ai de vos major,
Ni l'enveya, ni'l dezir, ni'l talen;
E non es hom, tan mos enemicx sia,
S'il n'aug dir ben, que non tenha encar,
E, si'n ditz mal, mais no m pot dir ni far
Neguna re que a plazer me sia.

"Ja no us donetz, bels amics, espaven
Que ja ves vos aia cor trichador,
Ne qu'ie us cange per nul autr' amador,
Si m pregavon d'autras donas un cen;
Qu' amors que m te' per vos en sa bailia,
Vol que mon cor vos estuy e vos gar;
E farai o; e s'ieu pogues emblar
Mon cors, tals l'a que j'amais non l'auria."

In the English translation of Sismondi's *Literature of the South of Europe*, vol. i. p. 107, Mr. Roscoe has given a translation in verse of this song, of which we subjoin the first couplet:—

"Into what cruel grief and deep distress
The jealous and the false have plunged my heart.

The *sirvente*, which gradually became transferred from subjects of love to subjects of war, and the satire of manners and political abuses, and which has consequently more of fire and sincerity than most Provençal songs, was divided into stanzas like the *chanson*, though both in length and number of lines, and in the succession of rhymes, it was more irregular. Such a style of composition was admirably suited to the impassioned military ardour, the bitter preliminaries, or the triumphant sequels of war. Partaking somewhat of each characteristic, and blending therewith the most delicate refinement of thought and language, the following *sirvente* of Bernard Arnaud de Montcuc fairly challenges our attention. It was written apparently on the renewal, by Henry the Second of England, of his pretensions to the county of Toulouse, which town he unsuccessfully besieged in 1159.

"Now when the rose trees
Are without flower or seed,
And the rich inferiors
Have (their) chase through the plains,
The humour takes me,
So doth their quarrel please me,
To make a sirvente.
For in low estate
They have all good store made,
And because love
Makes me more gay
Than doth
The fine time of May;
Now am I gay, whomsoever that afflicts;
Such joy is promised me.

Depriving it by every treacherous art
Of all its hopes of joy and happiness:
For they have forced thee from my arms to fly,
Whom far above this evil life I prize;
And they have hid thee from my loving eyes.
Alas! with grief, and ire, and rage, I die."

"Many a courser steed
Shall we see towards Tarzane,
Hard by Balaguier,
Of the doughty king who boasts
That he has claim to excel;
He will come without fail
There in Carcassone.
But great fear
The Frenchmen have not:
But that have I
Here of thee
Lady, because (it) terrifies me
The desire that I have
For thy fair courtly body
Fulfil all good things.

"This armed steed,
Hauberk, polished lance,
And good sword of steel,
And approaching war,
I prize more than greyhound
Or brave appearance,
Or peace, by which one is
Minished of possession
Depressed and made low;
And because I know
The true worth
Which I shall have in thee
Lady, or I shall die,
I pride more that which I lack of thee
Than if I possessed another.

"Pleaseth me well the archer
Near the barbican,
When he casteth the stones,
And the wall crumbles,
And through many an orchard
The army grows and is arranged;
And I would (it) were as pleasing,

Such mastery,
There to the English king;
As it pleaseth me
When I recall
How thou hast with joy
Lady, here gained
The prize of youth and beauty,
So that naught fails thee.

"And he would have entire
Honour, he whom all despise,
If with such heed
He would here cry:
(Oh) Guienne!
And would smite the first,
The honoured Count of Valence.
For his seal (fame) is
Of such light import
That here I name it not.
But I will say
That with fear
I own love.
Lady, what shall I do
If with thee mercy avail me not,
Nor my good faith?

"ENVOI.

Gay lord
And true,
Who knowest (how) from every quarrel
To gain honour, as I know,
From Toulouse and from the Agenois
In spite of the French." [1]

[1] We give below the two first stanzas and the *envoi* in the original.

" Er can li rozier
So ses flor ni grana,
E'l ric menuzier
An cassa per sana,
M'es pres cossirier,
Tan me platz lor tenza,
De far sirventes;
Car en vil tenensa
An tot bon pretz mes:
E car may
Me ten gay
Amors, que non fay

The *tensons*, as we have already said, were discussions usually between knights and lady-poets about some delicate love question. Here follow four stanzas of one between the Countess of Die and Raimbaud of Orange :—

"Friend, with great torment,
I am through you in great trouble;
And, from the grief which I suffer through it,
I do not believe that you feel anything.
Therefore, why do you call yourself a lover,
Since to me you leave all the evil?
For we two do not share it equally."

"Lady, love has such work,
When two friends it enchains,
That the evil they have, and the joy,
Each feels in his (own) way;
Because I think, and I am no deceiver,
That a severe pang at heart
Wholly possesses me." . . .

"Friend, so much I know you a flatterer,
What regards amorous affairs,
That I believe that as a knight
You have become fickle;

"El bel temps de may,
Eras soy gais, cuy que pes,
Tals joys m'es promes.

Mon caval corsier
Veirem vas Tarzana,
Devas Balaguier,
Del pros rey que s vana
C'a pretz a sobrier;
Venra ses falhensa
Lay en Carcasses;
Mas ges gran temensa
Non an li Franses:
Mas ieu n'ai
De vos sai,
Dona, qui m'esglai
Lo desir qu'ieu n'ay
Del vostre bel cors cortes
Complit de totz bes." . .

ENVOI.

"Senhor gay
E veray,
Que s sap de tot play
Onrar, qu'ieu o say,
De Tolza e d'Aganes,
Malgrat dels Franses."

And I must well remind you of it,
For well it appears that you think of another,
Because for my thoughts you do not care."

"Lady, may never hawk
I carry, nor (follow the) chase in fine weather,
If ever—since you gave me entire joy—
I was of any other a follower:
Nor am I such a deceiver;
But through envy the disloyal
Suppose me so, and make me out venal."[1]

The *aubade* is amongst the most graceful in form and spirit of all the Provençal songs, dealing, as it does, with perhaps the loveliest moment of the day—the passing of the darkness and the dawning of the light. The topics inwoven with this distinctive idea are sometimes religious; but here, also, in the great majority of instances, Love exacts the honour due to him. Two lovers, chiding the inopportune appearance of the sun, and lamenting the shortness of night, are again and again the characters who figure in the *aubade*, and not unfrequently add a touch of looseness to the natural grace and tenderness of the poem. Such is the case with the following exquisite and anonymous piece:—[2]

[1] "Amicx, ab gran cossirier
Sui per vos et en greu pena,
E del mal qu'ieu en suffier
No cre que vos sentatz guaire;
Doncx, per que us metetz amaire
Pus a me laissatz tot la mal?
Quar abduy no'l partem egual."

Domna, amors a tal mestier,
Pus dos amicx encadena,
Qu'el mal qu'an e l'alegrier
Senta quex a son veiaire;
Qu'ieu pens, e no sui guabaire,
Que la dura dolor coral
Ai eu tota a mon cabal." . . .

"Amicx, tan vos sai lauzengier
E fait d'amorosa mena
Qu'ieu cug que de cavalier
Siatz devengutz camjaire;
E deg vos o ben retraire,
Quar ben paretz que pessetz d'al,
Pos del mieu pensamen no us cal."

"Domna, jamais esparvier
No port, ni cas ab cerena
S'anc pueys, que m detz joi entier
Fuy de nulh' autra enquistaire;
Ni no suy aital bauzaire;
Mas per enveia'l deslial
M'o alevon e m fan venal."

[2] Mr. Swinburne, in his *Poems and Songs*, has partly paraphrased this

"Within an orchard, under the hawthorn leaves,
The lady holds her friend to her side,
Until the watcher cries he sees the dawn.
O God! O God! that dawn should come so soon!

"Would God the night might never fail,
And that my friend might ne'er depart from me,
And that the watcher might see day nor dawn.
O God! O God! that dawn should come so soon!

"Fair sweet friend, let us make play anew,
In the garden where sing the birds,
Until the watcher touch his pipe.
O God! O God! that dawn should come so soon!

"By the sweet air which has come from thence,
From my friend fair, courteous, and gay,
Of his breath have I drunk a sweet draught.
O God! O God! that dawn should come so soon!

"The lady is agreeable and pleasant.
For her beauty many gaze upon her,
And she possesseth her heart in loyal love—
O God! O God! that dawn should come so soon!" [1]

song in "The Orchard," without sacrificing the passion and beauty of the original. We give the first stanza:—

"Leave go my hands, let me catch breath and see;
Let the dewfall drench either side of me;
Clear apple-leaves are soft upon that moon,
Seen sidelong like a blossom in the tree;
Ah God! ah God! that day should be so soon."

[1] "En un vergier, sotz fuelha d'albespi,
Tenc la dompna son amic costa si,
Tro la Gayta crida que l'alba vi.
Oy Dieus! oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve!

"Plagues à Dieu ja la nueitz non falhis,
Ni'l mieus amicx lonc de mi no s partis,
Ni la Gayta jorn ni alba ne vis.
Oy Dieus! oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve!

"Bels dous amicx, fassam un joc novel
Ins el jardi on chanton li auzel.

We have not illustrated, nor even so much as mentioned, all the varieties of Provençal verse. The task would be a long one, and it may be doubted whether its fulfilment would earn for us the thanks of our readers. But it must not be supposed that the lyric verse of the troubadours, though this is characteristic of the age and the country, comprises the whole poetry of southern France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. We have already mentioned the bitter satire generated by the abuses of the Church, and by the cruelties of the crusade against the Albigenses. We have noticed also the *ensenhamen*, popular treatises in rhyme usually addressed to some high-born lord or lady, and containing sage precepts upon the regulation of conduct and etiquette. Amanieu des Escas[1] was a didactic poet of this school, two of whose *ensenhamen* are extant. Nor was prose unpractised in the Romance tongue of the south, even by the troubadours. Raimbaud, Count of Orange,[2] one of the earliest troubadours of Provence proper, has left a poem, every couplet of which is followed by a commentary in prose. The *épître*, again, was a familiar form of composition, arranged generally in lines of less than ten syllables, which served as a vehicle for petitions, thanks, advice, moral suasion, or instruction. The *trésors* were, as a rule, dreamy and monotonous encyclopedias, charged with meagre reminiscences of all the facts of art or science which

Tro la Gayta toque son caramel.
Oy Dieus! oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve!

"Per la douss' aura qu'es venguda de lay
Del mieu amic belh e cortes e gay,
Del sieu alen ai begut un dous ray.
Oy Dieus! oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve!

"La dompna es agradans e plazens;
Per sa beutat la gardon mantas gens,
E a son cor en amar leyalmens.
Oy Dieus! oy Dieus! de l'alba tan tost ve!

[1] He lived about the end of the thirteenth century. [2] He died in 1173

happened to have come under the writer's cognisance. That of Pierre de Corbiac[1] consists of some eight hundred and forty alexandrines limited to a single rhyme. He says of himself—[2]

"I am rich in mind, and though I have no great inheritance, castles, hamlets, and other domains; although I have neither gold, silver, nor silk, no other wealth than my own person, I am nevertheless not poor. I am even richer than a man who has a thousand golden marks. I was born at Corbiac, where I have relatives and friends. My income is moderate, but my courtesy and my intelligence make me live respected by gentlefolks. I walk with my head erect, like a rich man; and indeed I am one, as I have collected a treasure" (knowledge).

This splendid literature, this poetic blossom of southern France, was completely crushed by the terrible wars and sufferings of the country in the fanatical crusade directed against it from the north. The inspiration of the troubadours perished with the independence of the southern kingdoms and counties, and with the religious freedom and purity of the Albigenses. The Romance lyric poetry, which had from the beginning flourished chiefly in Provence, found at the court of the Provençal Counts its latest refuge. "These good Counts,"[3] Nostradamus says, "were, as if by inheritance, so munificent and liberal towards lofty and noble spirits, that they heaped upon them honours, lordships, and wealth, that day by day one found rare and illustrious poets brought to the light, so that it seemed as if Provence would never be barren, nor cease from the production of lofty spirits, excellent and distinguished men." The death of the last of the Bérengers, and the accession of Charles of Anjou, who cared

[1] Probably about the thirteenth century.

[2] Manuscript of the National Library at Paris.

[3] *Bons Comtes* was the name usually given by the troubadours to the Counts of Toulouse.

more for politics than for letters, brought this Augustan age to an end; and before many years had passed, the cession by Amaury de Montfort of his father's possessions to the king of northern France virtually ended the independence of the south. In 1229 was founded the university of Toulouse, and Innocent IV., stigmatising the Romance language as being identified with heretical opinions, forbade its employment by the students, and so contributed to hasten the decline of the literature of the troubadours. The language of the north was thus, in a manner, forced upon the south; and from this time we find, without surprise, that Romance literature, in so far as it may be said to have continued in existence, steadily deteriorated, whilst the *langue d'oc* became more and more affected by the influence of its northern rival. The troubadours of the fourteenth century afford ample evidence of the fact, as may be readily perceived from a glance at the pages of Geffroy de Luc, Raymond de la Tour de Marseille, who wrote a sirvente against his mother-in-law, and of Bernard Rascas.[1]

§ 4. Early Epics of the Langue d'oïl

The tenth century had been the darkest of the dark ages; and the meagre trace which it has left upon the page of history tells us of little more than terrible plagues, famines of almost incredible severity recurring year after year, universal horror and depression, during which men's hearts failed them, and nothing less than the destruction of the world was looked for day by day. The eleventh century lifted this dark veil;

[1] Take for example the following lines from Rascas, inspired by the death of his wife:—

"Lous ours hardys . . .
Lou dauphin dins la mar, lou tone e la balena,
Monstres impetuous, ryaumes e comtats
Lous princes e lous reys saran per mort domtas."

pestilence and famine had done their worst; the hopes of men revived, and they set themselves once more to build, and plant, and enjoy, and fight. Then once more literature revived; and that which was really the dawn of French literature at last appeared.

It is of course extremely natural, and precisely what we should have expected, that the first poetry of the north was epic rather than lyric; based as it was rather upon the deeds of heroes than of lovers. And again it is natural that the trouvères of this epic poetry rather sought for their heroes in the history and traditions of the countries with which their ancestors had been most closely associated; that is to say, in the history of ancient Greece and Rome, in the traditions of Britain and Brittany, and in the recent traditions of their own country. As for the Teutons on the continent, the genius of France seemed as unwilling to be indebted to them for her literature as for their language.

The trouvères were the makers of the poems wherewith they delighted to cheer all classes, and to rouse their spirits, even for war. They took it ill that their less staid and decorous rivals, the *jongleurs*, who were singers rather than poets, should sometimes attract the praises and the rewards of their patrons; they called them *trovéors bâtards*, and asserted that they degraded the noble art; priding themselves especially on their intellectual superiority which enabled them to be original. Benoît de Sainte-Maure[1] boasts that his "story is not worn, nor scarcely found in any places, nor has as yet been written." And the unknown author of the *Roman de Thèbes*[2] says bitterly, "Now they go, of all trades, though neither scholar nor knight; for as many can listen as asses to a

[1] In the *Roman de Troie.*
"Cette ystoire n'est pas usée,
Ni en guère de lieux trouvée,
Jà écrite ne fut encore."

[2] "Or s'en aillent de tous mestiers,
Se il n'est clers on chevaliers:
Car autant peuvent écouter
Comme les ânes au harper."

harper." And another sings:[1] "Now lords, whom may God bless, listen to a song of many a great lordship; *jongleurs* sing it, but hardly know it. A scholar has put it in rhyme, and arranged it again." And another,[2] "These *jongleurs* who do not know how to rhyme, made the work go wrong in several places, and did not know how to place the words." From which it is clear that the *jongleurs* ventured sometimes to turn the tables on the trouvères by emendations and glosses as well as by original versification.

The *jongleur* was usually, however, a man of no pretension to social consideration; being either a wandering knave, blest with a strong constitution, a good memory, and abundance of coolness and cleverness, or else a household servant —in the same sense that a *ménestrel*[3] was primarily a domestic. He carried with him his *vielle*, a small kind of violin, across the strings whereof he drew his bow in the intervals between his strophes, whilst he sang his stories, with a monotonous cadence at the end of each line. He was welcome enough at feasts, marriages, tournaments, and generally at the tables of the rich. His audience—now within doors, now without—would gather round him and listen greedily to his songs; "baron, knight, and sergeant-at-law, men and women great and small." At the sound of his fiddle he was sure to have a crowd about him; and he would whet the appetite of his hearers by boasting that "there was none in the whole world who knew so many *Chansons de Geste*[4] as he, that he

[1] "Or écoutez, seigneurs que Dieu bénie,
Une chanson de moult grand seigneurie;
Jongleurs la chantent et ne la savent mie
Un clerc en vers l'a mise, et rétablie."

[2] "Ces jongleurs qui ne savent rimer
Firent l'ouvrage en plusieurs lieux fausser,
Ne surent pas les paroles placer."

[3] *Minister ministrellus.*

[4] The name by which the national French epics were usually described was *Chansons de Geste;* from the Latin phrase *res gestæ*, public acts, authentic narrative. Of these *Chansons*, 800 manuscripts have been already (1876) dis-

knew tales of adventures, delightful to hear, and also tales of the Round Table." And after all was over, he or his wife would go round collecting the coin, apostrophising those who gave nothing, much in the style of wandering jugglers in the nineteenth century.

The first efforts of the trouvères were partly directed towards the celebration of national heroes; both because the deeds of illustrious Frenchmen were most familiar to them, and were the subject of greater pride to themselves and to their hearers, and because their poetic genius, still only half-fledged, had not acquired the courage to venture far afield. And truly there was, in the history of the Carlovingian kings and their knights, as well as of their predecessors and successors, abundant inspiration for romantic minds. Throughout the long night of the tenth century Frenchmen had cherished the glories of the previous epoch, during which the sword of Charlemagne had established a mighty empire, stretching between the North Sea and the Mediterranean, between the Ebro and the Oder. No sooner had a new prosperity taught the poet to sing, and given to kings, nobles, and people, the leisure and the inclination to hear, than the mind of the nation fell back upon its happiest traditions, and began to create its popular literature. Some of the earliest poems of the trouvères go as far back as the times of Clovis and Dagobert;[1] whilst others come down almost to contemporary heroes.[2] But of all the epics of the national French cycle, the figure of Charlemagne is the centre, as Arthur is the centre of the epics of Britain.

covered, including those of the Carlovingian, Classical, and Arthurian cycles. The word *geste* came to be used as an abstract substantive; *gens de geste* were men of historic fame or ancestry.

[1] The romances of *Parthénopex de Blois*, and *Florient et Octavien*. The old English versions of the first romance have been edited for the Roxburghe Club by the Rev. W. E. Buckley, 1862.

[2] The romances of *Hugh Capet* (who died A.D. 996), *Le Chevalier au Cygne*, and *Le Bastard de Bouillon*. An English abridgment of the second romance, called *The Knight of the Swan*, has been often published; the last edition by Mr. H. H. Gibbs, for the Early English Text Society.

The best poems of this national French cycle were written, or at least the date of their first documentary evidence occurs, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; but there is little doubt that many of these existed, in more or less incomplete form, as early as the eleventh century. And in any case, this latter epoch is sufficiently distinguished by poems which unquestionably had their origin soon after the death of Hugh Capet. We read of a *jongleur* in the army of William the Conqueror, A.D. 1066, who sang the deeds of Roland as he rode to meet the foe. Wace describes him in the *Roman de Rou*, as "Taillefer, who sang very well, upon a horse which quickly went, rode before the duke, singing of Charlemagne and of Roland, and of Oliver and his vassals who died at Roncevaux."[1]

It would be impossible to state with precision the date when the popular epics of France—whether in the Romance, in the purer Latin, or in any other tongue—had birth. It would be difficult, in the first place, to assign the period when the ancient Gaelic and Iberian ceased to be employed in the remote country districts, where these languages would certainly endure long after Latin had become common in the towns. And, in the absence of documentary evidence, it would be rash to assert that there was no popular poetry in France, even in the Romance language, before the seventh and eighth centuries. That there was a certain quantity of poetic narrative composed and preserved by the Druids in the Gaelic language, before and during the Roman occupation, is certain. Of this poetry we have no literary remains, unless fragments of it exist in the north-western peninsula. Had this Druidic verse no legitimate successor in the popular esteem, which has perished,

[1] "Taillefer ki moult bien cantout
Sur un roussin qui tot alout
Devant li dus alout cantant
De Kalermaine e de Rolant,
E d'Oliver et des vassals
Ki moururent à Roncevals."

even from history, more completely than the memorial records of the Gauls and Celts? There have been some writers, at all events, who have found, in the earlier parts of the epic of the *Loherains*, traditions of the invasion of Attila and the Huns (A.D. 451). The facts correspond, whilst the names may have been changed; and a literary instinct will not be able to pass over as insignificant the fact that the author of this poem, referring to the plunder of the Christian clergy in order to pay the barbarian soldiers, justifies Attila for his conduct in this respect. That the epic itself was written at disjointed periods of time is probable from internal evidence. Thus, the enemies of the French, who are at first described as "Wandles," Vandals, appear later on as Saracens. It is distinctly an epic of national heroism opposed to invasion; the spirit is uniform throughout, but the character of the incident varies. Be it observed, moreover, that an epic of the eleventh century, dealing professedly or implicitly with events of the fifth, may have been original so far as the words were concerned, whilst it was *retrouvé* rather than *trouvé*, based upon a foregoing epic in an archaic tongue, which a scholar or learned priest alone was able to decipher.

§ 5. The Carlovingian Cycle.

In the time of Charlemagne the Saracens had begun to press heavily upon the outposts of Christian Europe, and whilst the typical hero of the *Chansons de Geste* was a Christian knight, his typical foe was a Saracen. The instinct of the trouvères led them persistently away from the exploits of Charlemagne in the north and east, and centred the interest of their poems in the campaigns, historical or traditional, of himself, his knights, and his successors, against the Mussulman invaders of Spain and the south of Europe. Of the three-and-thirty undoubted expeditions of Charlemagne only

one, which was not undertaken against the Saracens, is celebrated by Jean Bodel in the *Chanson des Saxons*, of which the hero is Witikind. Historical accuracy was sacrificed to the taste of the hearers and the fashion of the trouvères; and, no doubt, many a deed of prowess, wrought by the great Emperor and his followers on the banks of the Rhine and the Oder, was remodelled and transferred by the complaisant poets to the plains of Septimania or the defiles of the Pyrenees. Not only thus are honours thrust upon Charlemagne to which he himself never aspired, but he is credited now and again with the acts of his predecessors, and even of his descendants. Yet more, according to a later writer, possibly a monk, Charlemagne and his twelve knights[1] went to the Holy City itself, and sat in the temple of Jerusalem; miracles were performed in their honour, and they returned laden with relics for the Abbey of Saint Denis.

The *Chanson de Roland*, the best known, the longest, and incomparably the finest epic dealing with Charlemagne and the Saracens, illustrates very aptly the best features of the early national poetry of the *Langue d'Oïl*.[2] It was probably the work of more than one hand, for the plot bears evidence of having been extended from point to point. The work of the first trouvère was no doubt conterminous with the song of Roland which Taillefer sang before William of Normandy; but the epic as we now have it, as it was discovered at Oxford

[1] Probably an Arthurian reminiscence. Alexander and several other heathen kings have been gifted by the trouvères with twelve peers. In Warton's *History of English Literature*, ed. Hazlitt, vol. ii., p. 197, Mr. Shelly observes—"It is worth while remarking how entirely the meaning of the title given to the peers has been lost by the English poets. . . . We read of the 'twelve dussypere' (les douze pairs), and in other places we find each single knight called 'a dozeper,' while in the Ashmole MS. of *Sir Ferumbras* the word becomes 'doththeper.'"

[2] According to M. Léon Gautier, *Epopées Françaises*, only one poem of the Carlovingian cycle, the *Chanson de Roland*, was written at the end of the eleventh century, twenty-two belong to the twelfth, nearly fifty to the thirteenth, and seven to the two following centuries.

and first printed in 1837, goes far beyond the death of Roland and Oliver. We add a brief summary of the events, which are recounted, of course, with a *minimum* of historical accuracy, in this interesting epic.[1]

The Saracen Marsillus, King of Spain, nearned in by Charlemagne's army round Saragossa, sends to the Emperor a petition for peace. Charlemagne, by advice of Roland, despatches his answer by Ganelon, who, hating the task, and probably inspired by previous antipathy to his brother knight, resolves to betray him. He returns from Marsillus laden with rich presents, and bearing the full submission of the Saracens, on condition that Charlemagne shall retire into France. The Emperor, not without misgivings and sinister dreams, consents, and Ganelon contrives that Roland shall be in command of the rear-guard of the French army, which was, in fact, the post of honour. But he had plotted with Marsillus that the Saracen host should treacherously fall upon this rear-guard in the mountain passes, whilst Charlemagne was far ahead with the bulk of the army.

With Roland were Oliver and Archbishop Turpin ; and on this battlefield *par excellence* of Middle Age chivalry the Church figures side by side with the sword. Christianity has its triumphs as grand as those of war. Here also the hand of the *clerc-trouvère* is to be recognised. Long is the unequal struggle maintained between the twenty thousand French and the innumerable pagans who pour down the mountain-side from every cleft and defile. Roland refuses to summon Charlemagne to his assistance ; Oliver dies by his side ; his gallant friends are hewn down ; the good archbishop blesses those who fight and those who die, until he also breathes his

[1] There exists in French a prose romance, published first in 1486, about the deeds of Charlemagne, and called *Fierabras*, translated from the Latin, and also remodelled from an older French romance in verse, which, according to M. Gaston Pâris, *Histoire Poétique de Charlemagne*, is even, at the present time, reprinted in a more or less disfigured form at Epinal and at Montbéliard for popular circulation.

last; and, finally, Roland himself, who cannot break his famous sword Durandal, places it underneath him, as well as his horn, and shares the lot of his friends, who cover the glorious battlefield.

But before he died he had sounded his miraculous horn, and Charlemagne, who was thirty leagues ahead, heard the ominous note, and returned. Ganelon would have dissuaded him, but the Emperor, for all reply, ordered the traitor to be bound hand and foot. He reached the field only to find the completeness of the Saracens' success, and, after obtaining from God that the day should be prolonged, in order that the fight may last the longer, he pursues the pagans and drives them into the Ebro. Marsillus, at the point of death, cedes his kingdom to Baligant, Emir of Babylon, who had arrived for the purpose of succouring him. But Charlemagne, who had returned to Roncevaux, and collected the remains of his faithful servants, hears of Baligant's approach, turns upon him, and destroys the second Saracen host. This latter portion of the epic is related at great length, and includes a long enumeration of the opposing hosts, bringing to mind the like feature in the Homeric poems. It is full of incident and episode, and it ends with the honourable interment of the heroes of Roncevaux, and with the punishment of the traitor Ganelon. The whole epic is charged with Christian as well as warlike fervour, and deals largely in the miraculous and the supernatural.

The passage between Roland and Oliver, when they first become aware of the treachery which has been practised upon them, is sufficiently fine to be quoted as an example of the spirit and language of the poem, which may with probability be ascribed to the eleventh century :—

> "Oliver has climbed upon a lofty hill,
> Looks to the right along the grassy valley ;
> He sees approach the Saracen army,
> And thus addresses Roland, his comrade :—

'From Spain I see (hear) come such a noise,
So many white hauberks, so many dazzling helmets!
Here our French will feel great rage.
Ganes knew it, the felon, the traitor
Who induced us before the Emperor (to go in the rear).'
'Be silent, Oliver,' the valiant Roland replies—
'He is my father-in-law; do not say a word against him.'"

The two paladins had not always been friends; their reconciliation had been effected by a supernatural agency. In their youth they had met in mortal combat. "The fight endures for a whole day, the two horses of the knights lie cut to pieces at their feet, the fire leaps from their battered breastplates, and still the combat endures. The sword of Oliver is broken on the helmet of Roland. 'Sire Oliver,' says Roland, 'go and find another, and a cup of wine, for I am sore athirst.' A boatman brings from the town three swords and a jar of wine. The knights drink from the same cup, after which the battle begins again. About the end of the second day Roland cries, 'I am ill; I would lie down and rest.' But Oliver answers ironically, 'Lie down, if you will, on the green grass; I will rip you open to cool you.' Then Roland rejoins in a loud voice, 'Vassal, I said it to prove you; I would gladly fight still another four days without eating or drinking.' Accordingly the combat proceeds." At length a cloud sinks down from heaven between the two champions, and from the cloud there comes an angel. He salutes the two French knights, and in the name of God bids them be at peace, and reserve their prowess for the misbelievers at Roncevaux. They obey, trembling with awe.[1]

[1] Several early English romances, which are more or less imitations of the French, relate to Charlemagne. They are *Roland* (probably written in the thirteenth century), edited by Mr. Thomas Wright, at the end of M. Michel's edition of *La Chanson de Roland; Otuwel*, edited by Mr. Ellis for the Abbotsford Club; *Charlemagne and Roland*, which exists only in scattered fragments, and has partly been edited by Mr. Ellis in his *Otuwel; Ferumbras*,

Another part of the poem describes how Roland, perceiving that a battle with the treacherous Saracens is inevitable, and having rejected Oliver's last entreaties to sound his horn and summon the Emperor to their aid, exhorts his friend to fight worthily, as the vassal of a worthy lord. "For one's lord," he says, "one must suffer great evils, and endure great cold and great heat; one must lose for him both blood and flesh." The *Chanson de Roland* is distinguished from the other *Chansons de Geste* by this loftier conception of the feudal relations; and it contains no word derogatory to the dignity of the Emperor. This is another proof, if it were needed, of the early date of the epic.

With the mixture of fervent Christian piety and unquestioning credulity, another explanation of the supernatural element in the poems of the more learned trouvères may perhaps be associated; namely, unconscious imitation of the epics of Greece and Rome. It is by no means improbable that the author of the first part of the *Chanson de Roland* was acquainted with the *Æneid;* or, perhaps, even a later hand in the twelfth or thirteenth century interpolated the matter-of-fact description of the "conscia terra," which we append.

"The battle is marvellous and severe.
Very well strike there Oliver and Roland.
The archbishop (Turpin) more than a thousand blows there returns.
The twelve peers are not slow,
And the French there strike as one.
Died there pagans by thousands and hundreds.
No one, unless he runs away from death, escapes.
Whether they will it or not all there leave life.

of which two versions exist, one analysed by Mr. Ellis, the other published for the Early English Text Society. I have abridged this list from one given in Warton's *History of English Literature*, ed. Hazlitt, vol. ii. p. 195, *et passim*.

The French lose there their best booty.
They shall never see again their parents or their relatives,
Nor Charlemagne who awaits them at the gorges.
In France there rages a most wonderful storm;
Now is heard there thunder and wind.
Rain and hoar frost tremendously
Fall there, and thunder, quickly and often
The earth quakes there truly,
From Saint Michel, at Paris, unto Sèns,
From Besançon unto the harbour of Wissant,
There is no abode of which the walls do not crack.
Southwards there is great darkness;
It only becomes clear when the Heaven is cleft.
No one sees it who is not much frightened;
Several say: 'This is the end,
The end of the age in which we are now.'
They do not know and do not speak the truth:
It is the great grief for the death of Roland." [1]

This last line is very fine. The whole of Nature is throbbing, full of woe and mourning for the death of a doughty paladin, showing its sorrow by earthquakes, tempests, thunder, and lightning:—"It is the great grief for the death of

[1] We give the above lines of the *Chanson de Roland* (ed. Muller) in the original:—

" La bataille est merveilluse e pesant,
Mult ben i fiert Oliver et Rollant,
Li arcevesques (Turpin) plus de mil colps i rent,
Li XII. pers ne s'en targent nient,
E li Franceis i fierent cum unement.
Moerent païen à millers e à cenz;
Ki ne s'en fuit de mort n'i ad guarent,
Voeillet o nun, tuti laisset sun tens.
Franceis i perdent lor meillors garnemenz,
Ne reverrunt lor peres ne lor parenz,
Ne Carlemagne ki as porz les atent.
En France en ad mult merveillus turment,
Orez i ad de tuneire e de vent,
Pluies e gresilz desmesuréement,
Chiedent i fuildres e menut e suvent;
E terre moete co i ad veirement

Roland." Does it not remind us of the mythical complaint of nature, "Pan is dead"?

One of the grandest of all the early French epics, is the *Roman des Loherains*—"the Lorrainers"—which probably dates as far back as the twelfth century.[1] It is an epic of feudal society; and as such it deserves particular attention, as illustrating in a remarkable manner the institutions and customs of feudalism in France.

The empire of Charlemagne was divided and subdivided amongst his children and their successors, whose power over their subjects diminished with the extent of their possessions. Their barons frequently exercised more real authority than themselves; the *leudes* repeatedly asserted their right of electing the occupant of the throne. Feudal privileges were perhaps, in France, more often exacted by the barons from a vainly-resisting monarch than voluntarily bestowed by the latter upon the former; and the later trouvères, always depending for their most valuable patronage upon the noble and wealthy families, adopted their views and championed their cause. The second period of the national epic is mainly composed of *chansons*, wherein the contests, rebellions, triumphs, and virtues of the great barons are celebrated at the expense of the monarch—Charlemagne himself not excepted. The

> De seint Michel de Paris josqu' as Seinz,
> De Besençun tresqu' as (porz) de Guitsand,
> N'en ad recet dunt li mur ne cravent;
> Cuntre midi tenebres i ad granz
> N'i ad clartet se li (cels) nen i fent.
> Hume ne l' veit ki mult ne s'espaent;
> Dient plusor: 'Ço est li definement,
> La fin del secle ki nus est en présent.'
> Il ne le sevent ne dient veir nient:
> Ço est li granz dulors por la mort de Rollant."

[1] M. Paulin Pâris published in 1833-5 *Li Romans de Garin le Loherain*, etc., 2 vols. Most of the twenty manuscripts consulted date from the twelfth century, and disagree in their texts, probably through the caprices of the trouvères. They are written, moreover, in different dialects of the *langue d'oïl*.

feudal relations of the Emperor with his greater vassals are recorded[1] in many romances in this spirit. *Les Loherains* probably owes its authorship to more than one mind, and virtually covers events of more than one century. But it gives us a clearer view than any other *chanson* of the growth of feudal authority. The weakness of the king, Pepin, is implied the more naturally and delicately, inasmuch as he is represented as an infant; and the anti-monarchical prejudice is toned down by the fact that, when he grows up, he sides with the victorious party in the long feud which provides the action of the epic. This feud rages between the Lorrainers and the Picards—Germans and Frenchmen. The former are eventually triumphant; and the partiality of the successive authors of the poem is displayed for them throughout. Indeed *Les Loherains* is, in spirit, rather a Teutonic than a French epic. It was written, doubtless, by Germans who had adopted the French nationality, who cherished their descent from the followers of Pepin and Charlemagne, and who could not forget that their ancestors had conquered the country which was their home. To such a length is their partiality carried, that they cannot even suffer the brave leader of the vanquished party to fall in fight, but represent him as driven back into Spain, and forswearing the Christian faith. No wonder the poem was neglected when the French national spirit became harmonious and consolidated. No wonder it slept in obscurity for at least five centuries, only to be revived when the genius of literature had risen superior to feudal passion and national prejudice. Meanwhile it served, throughout its slow incubation, to gather up the manifold jealousies of the Teuton; just as the contemptuous silence concerning Teutonic prowess and success proved the deep-seated jealousies of the Gaul.

[1] By Huon de Villeneuve, in *Huon de Bordeaux* and in *Doolin de Mayence;* by Bertrans in the *Roman de Viane;* by Raymbert and Adams le Roy in *Ogier le Danois.*

The struggle between Fromont and Garin, the Lorrainer, arose out of their rivalry for the hand of Blancheflor, the heiress of wide domains, which she had inherited from her father, the rich King "Thierris." The latter had prayed on his deathbed that she might obtain for a husband some "franc baron," who would know how to defend her and her wealth; and he thought he had provided for her best interests in affiancing her to Garin, Duke of Lorraine. This betrothal, however, was subject to the consent of Pepin, for no vassal would venture to marry a rich heiress, the owner of important fiefs, without his suzerain's consent; unless, indeed, he was prepared to throw off his allegiance and violate his oath. But Garin swore to her that, come what would, she might count upon his assistance against all her foes.

Garin was a brave and skilful warrior; his brother Bègues was yet more skilful and renowned. The "Emperor" was besieging Saint Quentin, and could not take it. Duke Garin also was under the walls; and, great as was his prowess, he could not humble the proud and obstinately-defended town. The siege must have been raised, but by good fortune Bègues, who had been absent on a long expedition, suddenly arrived in the camp. His fame had spread far and wide; his enemies trembled before him, and his friends drew new courage from his presence. The tide of fortune was turned, and the city fell. Here was glory such as the trouvères loved to heap upon their patrons; a vassal coming to the rescue of an Emperor, and saving him from disgrace.

Blancheflor was not destined to fall to the lot of Garin. Pepin himself laid claim to her; and the betrothed pair submitted to his superior authority. But "The Lorrainers" is an epic of battle, not of love; and the exploits of the duke and his brother against the Picards, interspersed with episodes in the lives of the principal heroes, occupy the bulk of the poem. Terrible and ruthless are the encounters which these

old poets love to narrate; unbounded the joy which the knights take in their deadly struggles; great their courage and generosity, marred, however, now and then by the most bloodthirsty cruelty. One Lorrainer sends to Fromont the head of one of his relatives whom he had slain in battle. Again, when Guillaume de Montclin fell into the hands of Bègues, the latter, having killed Isoré de Boulogne, remembers how Guillaume had incited Isoré to cut off his opponent's head. The enraged victor, thereupon, tears out the entrails of his victim, and dashes them in Guillaume's face, crying: "There, vassal, is the heart of your cousin; now you can salt it and roast it." All this is told, of course, without apology; and it is to be observed that the deeds of the greatest cruelty are ascribed, even by Teuton writers, to the Teuton knights.

The third part of the *Roman des Loherains* was written by Jehan de Flagy, and is in many respects the most pleasing of the epic. This is especially the judgment to which one is forced after reading the passage describing the parting between Bègues and his family.

"You would have seen the castle stormed,
And the citizens come to the walls,
The knights arm themselves and don iron,
For they thought they should be attacked.
Bègues gets ready, and makes haste,
Laces one hose, ne'er fairer aye was seen;
Spurs they place at his heels,
Put on a coat of mail, fasten his burnished helmet,
And Beatrix girds on the bright steel sword,
Yclept Floberge, with hilt of purest gold.
'My lord,' said she, 'may God the crucified
Guard you to-day 'gainst death and every danger!'
The duke replied: 'My lady, you speak well.'
He looked at her, and pity stirred his heart,
For she had lately borne him young Gérin.
Then spoke, 'My lady, listen now to me,

For the Lord's sake, I pray you, mind my son.'
She answered, 'Sire, it shall be as you wish!'
They brought him then a noble Arab steed,
He in the stirrups straight leapt from the ground;
Shield round his neck; and then he took a lance,
Of which the point was green and burnished steel." [1]

The next scene is drawn with more delicate touches still. Bègues, long separated from the brother whom he loves so much, cannot resist the desire to see him again. Garin is at Metz, Bègues at his castle of Belin, near Bordeaux; all France lies between them, but it is not wide enough to keep these two grizzled warriors apart. The younger brother is happy in the midst of his family when the irresistible yearning comes upon him. A dozen lines of Flagy describe a scene of domestic bliss, such as Teutons in all ages have loved to paint:—

[1] The extracts from *Les Lohérains* are slightly modernised from the original, the text of M. Demogeot being adopted:—

"Vous eussiez vu le chastel estormir,
Et les bourgeois aux défenses venir,
Les chevaliers armer et fer-vêtir,
Car ils pensaient qu'on dût les assaillir.
Begues s'apprête, à la hâte il le fit,
Lace une chausse, nul plus belle ne vit;
Sur les talons lui ont éperons mis,
Vêt un haubert, lace un heaume bruni,
Et Béatrix lui ceint le brand fourbi:
Ce fut Floberge la belle au pont d'or fin.
'Sire,' fait-elle, 'Dieu qu'en la croix fut mis,
Vous défende hui de mort et de péril!'
Et dit le duc: 'Dame, bien avez dit!'
Il la regarde, moult grand pitié l'en prit.
Relevée est de nouvel de Gérin.
'Dame,' dit-il, 'entendez ça à mi:
Pour Dieu vous prie que pensiez de mon fils.'
Elle répond: 'Biaus sire, à vos plaisirs!'
On lui amène un destrier arabi,
De pleine terre est aux arçons salli;
L'écu au col, il a un épieux pris,
Dont le fer fut d'un vert acier bruni."

"One day, Bègues in castle Belin was,
And near him was the handsome Beatrix;
The duke upon her mouth and hand a kiss impressed,
And then the duchess very gently smiled,
She saw her two boys come into the hall
(For so the story runs): Gérin was the eldest named,
Hernaudin the second was called.
The one was twelve, and the other ten years old;
With them were six young men, all nobly born.
They move towards each other, run and leap,
And play, and laugh, and sport with many tricks." [1]

By and by Bègues tells Beatrix of his longing; how, moreover, he means to take his brother a present in the shape of a boar's head. He has heard of a famous old boar two hundred leagues away, in the forest of Valenciennes, and he is determined to kill it, and carry its head to Garin. Beatrix, in vain, endeavours to dissuade him: "My heart tells me, and it told ever true, that if you go there you shall never return." But Bègues remains firm to his purpose, prepares for the chase, and is ready to be gone. Before he goes he "to God commends the fair Beatrix, and Hernaudin and Gérin, his two children." And the trouvère adds the melancholy line, "O God! what grief! he never saw them more!" Bègues departs, slays the boar, and is about to resume his journey, when he is treacherously killed by a band of robbers whom he had previously driven from his path.

[1] "Un jour fut Begues au chastel de Belin:
Auprès de lui la belle Biatrix.
Le duc lui baise et la bouche et la main,
Et la duchesse moult doucement sourit.
Parmi la salle vit ses deux fils venir
(Ce dit l'histoire): l'aîné eut nom Gérin.
Et le second s'appelait Hernaudin.
L'un eut douze ans, et l'autre en avait dix.
Sont avec eux six damoiseaux de prix,
Vont l'un vers l'autre et coure et tressaillir
Jouer et rire et mener leurs délits."

Great is the grief of his family and friends at the inglorious death of the famous warrior; and his brother Garin says, "Ah! my lord Bègues, true knight, brave and bold, terrible and merciless towards enemies, gentle and simple towards all your friends; you have lost much, Girbert, my noble son! Earth, open up to receive me, unfortunate man that I am; it would be a great pity if I were to live long!"[1] Garin brings the body to Beatrix, who weeps and laments over it; and the friends of the dead man cry vengeance. The young Hernaudin cries—"Heavens, why have I not a little breastplate? I would help you against your enemies." The duke heard him, and took him up in his arms, kissed his mouth and face, and said, "By God, fair nephew, you are too courageous; you are like my brother in mouth and in face, the noble duke, to whom God may grant mercy!" So they buried the hero with great solemnities, and placed upon his marble tomb the epitaph, "He was the best man who ever rode on horseback."

The spirit of Christianity breathes through these *Chansons de Geste* rather by implication, and through the virtues of chivalrous generosity and self-devotion, than by direct manifestation. In death, however, it is always present; and the headstrong, bloodthirsty men, who in their lives were so difficult to curb, and who seldom suffered a scruple to intervene between themselves and their revenge, no sooner bite the dust on a field of battle than they pluck some leaves of grass with their relaxing fingers, and symbolise to themselves

[1] The following passage is taken from Paulin Pâris, *Roman de Garin*, ii. p. 263, and is not modernised:—

"Ha! sire Bègues, li loherains a dit,
Frans chevaliers, corageus et hardis!
Fel et angris contre vos anemis,
Et dols et simples a trestoz vos amis;
Tant as perdu, Girbert, beau sire fils!
Terre! car ouvre, si reçois moi, chaitis:
Ce est domage, si je longuement vis."

with these the consecrated elements. None so humble or so superstitious in their last moments as those who, in the lust of life, defied both earthly and heavenly monarchs, like the young lord of Fauconnès, whom his dying father adjured to deliver the castle of Naisil to the enemy, and who replied defiantly—"If I had one foot in Paradise, and the other in the castle of Naisil, I would draw back the one I had in Paradise, in order to put it back in Naisil."

§ 6. The Arthurian Cycle.

"Arthur is a present from Britain to France. M. H. de Villemarqué has placed the fact beyond doubt.[1] After reading the book, in which he compares with the text before him the romances of the Round Table and the ancient legends of Britain, we are convinced for example that the British legend of *Owen* preceded and inspired the romance of *Yvain*, or *Le Chevalier au Lion*. It is equally evident that *Pérédur* is the prototype of *Perceval*. We are less certain that the Mael of the British legends is the same person as the Lancelot of the romances, although Mael has in the Gaelic tongue the same signification as Lancelot, or rather Ancelot, which signifies a domestic."[2]

It is impossible to disagree with this, so long as we make full allowance for the common origin of the Gael and Cymri of France and of the early inhabitants of Great Britain, remembering also the close relationship which subsisted for many generations between the Britons of these islands and the Bretons of Armorica. It was, indeed, the followers of King Arthur himself who, after his final reverse and death in the vain endeavour to withstand the onset of the Teutonic conquerors, in the sixth century crossed the Channel into Armo-

[1] In *Les Romans de la Table ronde et les Contes des anciens Bretons.*

[2] Gérusez, *Histoire de la Littérature française*, vol. i. p. 68.

rica, and gave it thenceforth the name of Brittany. There they settled; and their descendants continued to wait for the return of the son of "mythic Uther," celebrating his praises in the meanwhile, and consoling their own evil fortunes, by constructing poetic legends out of their richly stored memories, or by repeating to each other the legends composed by the bards of Britain.

The best of the trouvères who contributed to the Arthurian cycle of *chansons* was Chrétien de Troyes; and his *Chevalier de la Charrette*, independent as it is in its episodes, original as it is in its manner of treatment, yet takes its principal characters from the British epic of Arthur and his Round Table. The "Knight of the Waggon" is Lancelot of the Lake, who, despatched to rescue Guinevere from the caitiff Méléagans, who had carried off the wife destined for King Arthur, loses his horse by the way, and avails himself of the waggon of a peasant. He is successful in his quest, as we know; and too successful for the subsequent happiness of Arthur and Guinevere. The poem is worthy of attention. It is "little else than a *fabliau*, in which we meet with grace and archness, and as the trouvère who composed it is a true son of Champagne, the archness is ingenuous. Chrétien de Troyes is a precursor of La Fontaine, with much of the simplicity and pungency of his narrative style. The incident of the waggon allows him to introduce a spice of comedy into a chivalric subject. In fact Lancelot can simulate cowardice and awkwardness in his passages of arms, after the manner of the English clowns, and mislead the spectators as well as his adversaries. When he shows his skill and courage, the effect is all the more telling by force of contrast. Thus he wins all hearts.[1]

[1] See Cérusez, *Histoire de la Littérature française*, vol. i. p. 72, *et passim*. Chrétien de Troyes is greatly indebted to the erudite French literary critic for the esteem in which he is held in the nineteenth century.

"And the ladies said,
Who looked at him with wonder,
That he should take them in marriage,
For they did not dare to trust much
In their beauty, nor in their riches,
Nor in their power, nor in their lofty birth,
Who neither for beauty nor for possessions,
Were worthy, any one of them, to have
This Knight, who is too valiant.
And nevertheless they make such vows,
Most of them, that they say
That, if to this one they are not married,
They will not be married this year,
Nor given to husband or master." [1]

The queen, who hears this talk, laughs in her sleeve, having no reason to be troubled about it. In fact she knows that for all the gold in the world "he would not take the best of them, nor the most beautiful, nor the most graceful, he who pleases all." Our trouvère can even be refined. When the queen leaves Lancelot to enter her apartment, the latter would fain pass in with her; but "can only accompany her with his eyes and his heart,"—

"But the way of the eyes was short,
For the room was too near;
And they would have entered then
Very willingly, if it could have been.
The heart, which more is lord and master,
And of much greater power,
Did enter after her,

[1] "Et les demoiselles disoient,
Qui a mervoilles l'esgardoient,
Que cil les tolt à marier,
Car tant ne s'osoient fier
An lor biautez, n'an lor richeces,
N'an leur pooir, n'an lor hauteces,
Que por biauté ne por avoir
Deignast nule d'eles avoir
Cil chevaliers, que trop est prouz
Et neporquant se font tex vouz
Les plusors d'eles, qu'eles dient
Que s'a cestui ne se marient
Ne seront ouan mariées,
N'à mari, n'à seignor données."

And the eyes remained without,
Filled with tears, with the body."[1]

"The Knight of the Waggon introduces several characters of the Arthurian legends, and preserves the features with which we are acquainted. Arthur is as gentle as usual, and more credulous than ever; his wife as tender and as treacherous; the seneschal Keu—in English Sir Key—no less jeering, no less presumptuous, no less unsuccessful in his undertakings; the good Gavain, ever brave, ever loyal, ever devoted, does not belie himself for a moment; Launcelot remains a model of courtesy, gallantry and fidelity; he is refined and cheerful; and if he does for this once stoop to a jest, he is not slow in compensating it. There are no new creations except the traitor Méléagans and his father Baudemagus. The character of this old king, who loves his son, who hates and seeks to counteract his treasons, is, towards this ravisher, this Paris of the British epic, a mixture of the gentleness of Priam and the wisdom of Antenor in their opposition to the ravisher of Helen. This comparison is not a fancy of criticism; it swells the list of the debts which the Middle Ages have incurred to antiquity in these poems of the Round Table, wherein have been observed the resemblance of the birth of Arthur to that of Hercules, the black sail of the vessel of Theseus to that which brings Iseult to her husband, and the precautions taken by the mother of Perceval to keep that second Achilles in ignorance and obscurity, far from the perils of war. All these reminiscences, more or less cloaked, are to be recog-

[1] "Mès as ials fu corte la voie
Que trop estait la chambre près :
Et il fussent antré après
Molt volentiers s'il poïst estre,
Li cuers, que plus est sire et mestre
Et de plus grant pooir assez,
S'an est outre après li passez,
Et li oil sont remès defors,
Plein de lermes, avec le cors.

nised, and ought to be dwelt upon. It is well to remember that the chain of time has never been completely broken."[1]

Perceval of Wales is another Arthurian legend, of which the French version, *Perceval le Gallois*, is attributed to Chrétien de Troyes. Perceval was the one knight who, in the quest of the Holy Graal, retained his purity of body and soul with sufficient steadfastness to secure the sacred relic from its guardian. When yet a stripling he escapes from his mother's care, and encounters three of Arthur's knights, whose noble appearance and splendid armour delight his mind and excite his curiosity to the utmost. He observes their coat of mail, and inquires of the knights if they are the God of whom his mother had spoken to him so often.

"Then answered Sir Gawayn,
Fair and courteously again,
'Son, as Christ us sayne,
Such are we not.'
Then said that true knight's child,
Who had lived in the woods wild,
To Gawayn the meek and mild,
And soft of answer.
'I shall slay you all three,
If you don't smartly now tell me
What things or folk ye be,
Since ye no Gods are.'
Then answered Sir Kay,
'Who then shall we say
Slew us all to-day
In this wild holt so bare?'
But says Gawayn to Kay,
'With thy proud words away;
I can win this child with play
If thou hold still.'
'Sweet son,' then said he,
'We are knights all three,

[1] Gérusez, *Histoire de la Littérature française*, vol. i. p. 75.

With King Arthur ride we,
That dwells on yon hill.'
Then said Perceval the light,
In goat-skins that was dight,
'Will King Arthur make me knight
If my vows I fulfil?'
Then said Gawayn right there
'I can give thee none answer:
But to the King I bid thee fare
To learn his will.'"

The boy then leaves them, returns to his mother, and tells her he will go to the king to be knighted. She informs him that whenever he sees a knight with a "mincver hood" he must doff his hood and embrace him; and she gives him a ring, which he must bring back:—

"He took the ring and took the spear,
Starts up upon the mare,
And from the mother that bore him
Now forth he goes to ride." [1]

He proves afterwards that "the child is father to the man," by becoming a perfect and stainless knight.

Several other poems have also been attributed to that sweetest of trouvères, Chrétien de Troyes, who died in the year 1191.[2] Jean Bodel, another trouvère, who lived in the reign of Philip Augustus,[3] wrote the *Chanson des Saxons*, of which the hero is Guiteclin, or Witikind, whose wife, Sebile, is of the class to which Guinevere and Iseult belong, and who has furnished those of her sex who tread in her paths with the time-worn excuse: "What is the use of woman's beauty if she does not employ it in her youth?" [4]

[1] I have borrowed these verses from the late Mr. Walter Thornbury's talented paraphrasing of an early English condensation of Chrétien de Troyes' *Sir Perceval of Wales.*

[2] These poems are: *Le Chevalier au Lion*, *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, *Érec et Énide*, *Cliget*, and *Tristan.*

[3] 1165-1223.

[4] "Que sert beauté de femme s'en jovant ne l'emploie?"

At this point we may refer to the Anglo-Norman rhyming chroniclers, such as Geoffroy Gaimar, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, and Robert Wace, the latter being the author of the *Romant de Rou* (Rollo), which is little more than a pedigree of the conquerors of Normandy. The prose writer Geoffry of Monmouth, by the encouragement of the English king, collected, about A.D. 1140, the ancient traditions of Britain. These were translated from Latin into Romance by Luces du Gast, Gasse le Blond, Walther Map, archdeacon of Oxford, Robert de Borron, Hélie de Borron,[1] Rusticien of Pisa, and the versions were the principal sources from which Chrétien de Troyes, his contemporaries and successors, drew the subjects of their poems. The first named of these, Lord of Gast near Salisbury, and a relative of Henry II., gives us very clear and satisfactory reasons for undertaking the task of translation.[2]

§ 7. The Classical Cycle.

It would have been strange if the *trouvères* had overlooked the great heroisms and enthusiasms of those ancient civilisations to which their nation owed so much, and in which their adopted tongue had so large and legitimate an interest. Something has already been said of the influence produced on the French national spirit by the history and literature of Greece and Rome; and the illustrations of this influence may now be copiously enlarged. Perhaps the first romance borrowed from the pages of the Greek poets was that of the life

[1] Mr. Pearson has tried to prove in the preface to the San Graal, ed. by Mr. Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club, that Robert de Borron was born in the village of Buces, arrondissement of Caen, and was an ancestor of Lord Byron. Mr. E. Hucher, in his preface to *le Saint Graal*, 1874, maintains that the family came from the French Gâtinais, in the neighbourhood of Sens.

[2] Luces du Gast does not pretend to be a very good French scholar, but he says that he translates the San Graal from Latin into "Roumans" because "tele est ma volontez en mon proposement, que je en langue française le translaterai."

of Ulysses. The earliest poem on the subject in the French language is, as we have seen, Provençal; but the siege of Troy, with its numerous adventures and episodes, naturally attracted the trouvères who had bethought themselves of turning to the ancients for their themes. The first who took this history as the groundwork of his poetical embroidery was Benoît de Sainte-Maure, who lived in England under Henry Beauclerc,[1] and who had the patience to write about thirty thousand lines, as well as another three-and-twenty thousand on the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie;* and others, both in England and France, followed in his train. The life of Alexander was still more in vogue amongst the trouvères; and in the reign of Philip Augustus,[2] Lambert le Court, and Alexander de Bernai, contributed to produce a *Chanson de Geste* of some literary importance, under the title of *Roman d'Alexandre.* It is in Alexandrine verse; the matter is taken chiefly from Quintus Curtius and the spurious Callisthenes; whilst the treatment is characteristically in the chivalric style, with abundance of the supernatural element. The poem might reasonably adopt as second title "The Mirror of Kings;" for it attributes to Alexander all the royal virtues which would become a monarch in the twelfth century. Thus say the writers:—

"The king who his kingdom wishes rightly to govern,
And the duke and the count who have land to keep,
All those ought to listen to the life of Alexander;
For he was a Christian, there never was such a knight;
No king was braver, or could better speak,
Nor ever was there a man more free in giving;
Ever since he died we never saw a man his equal."[3]

[1] 1068-1135. [2] 1165-1223.

[3] "Li rois qui son royaume veut par droit gouverner
Et li dus et li conte qui terre ont à garder,
Tous cil doivent la vie Alexandre escouter.
Se il fut crestïens, onques ne fu teus ber;
Rois ne fut plus hardis, ni mius séust parler,
Ni onques ne fu hom plus larges de douner;
Onques puis qu'il fu mors, ne vit nus hom son per."

The character of Alexander is clearly held up as a pattern to the kings of latter days; and the ideal relations between suzerain and vassals—the first elevating but not detracting from the dignity of the latter—are expressed in some of the noblest, as they are the most characteristic passages of the poem. Take the following speech of Eminidus of Arcadia to his comrades, who were terrified by the approach of Gadifer amidst the noise of clarions and drums:—

"My lords, it does not become you to be frightened,
For in our company there is no room for cowards;
Let each one think of the means of defending his life.
We are all noblemen, dukes, counts, and princes;
Therefore we ought to do much, to suffer much, to act much,
So that no one shall be able, after us, to reproach our heirs.
He who does not behave well here, ought henceforth not to eat
At the table of the king whom we love so dearly.
The blade of this sword does not wish to rest
Before I see it bathed in the brain (of the enemy).
To-day I wish to develope the battle and the mêlée;
Let each one think to do well; I shall begin the game."[1]

We cannot but turn back in our minds to the speech of Roland to Oliver, before the battle of Roncevaux; and certainly the later passage does not pale in loftiness of thought before the earlier one. Nor is this the only reminiscence

[1] "Seigneur, ne vous caut esmaier,
Car en notre compagne n'ont li couart mestier.
Penst ancuns que il puist sa vië calengier.
Tout sommes gentil homme, duc et conte et princier;
Si devomes tant faire, pener et esploitier
C'on ne l'puist après nous, à nos oirs reprocher:
Que ci ne fera bien, puis ne devra mangier
A la table le roi que nous avomes cier.
Li brans de ceste espée ne se viut estancier
De si que jou le voie en cervielle baignier.
Hui mais voel la bataille et l'essor surhaucier;
Peust cescuns de bien faire; le jeu voel commencer."

which the reader will acknowledge, as he hears of the great prowess of Alexander and his twelve chivalrous knights.[1]

§ 8. Satirical Poems.

Has satire its birth in love? and is it by satirising ourselves that we learn to satirise others? Certainly it is in the love-songs of France, the amorous *chansons* of the north and the amative ditties of the south, that we discover the first gleams of literary archness. The lover's jealousy of himself would supply the readiest motive; his jealousy of others would speedily do the rest. Out of the well-spring of delight comes the drop of bitterness. Every lover's compliment is a self-despite.

After love, religion; and it is hard to say which of the two provided the aptest excuse for satire. *Flore la Courtisane* was not a pretty name for a bishop; but under that name a certain Deacon John, the archbishop's favourite, created Bishop of Orléans by favour of the king's mistress, Bertrade de Montfort, was the subject of many a pleasant rhyme in the eleventh century. He was consecrated on the feast of the Innocents; a day on which religious Frenchmen had already been wont to relax both tongue and pen. So one of the clergy wrote,[2] "We elect a boy, observing the feast of the boys; not in accordance with our custom, but with the royal behests." The time came when the clergy in France had reason to wince at the pleasantries of others; but they began by being merry amongst themselves. *Landri* was also a

[1] There exist several other *chansons* about Alexander, such as *la Vengeance d'Alexandre*, *le Testament d'Alexandre*, *Signification de la mort d'Alexandre*, *le Roman de Cassanus*, *le Parfait du Paon*, and *le Restor du Paon*. Some of the earlier trouvères had even sung the fabulous adventures of Alexander's father, Philip of Macedonia.

[2] Eligimus puerum, puerorum festa colentes;
Non nostrum morem, sed regia jussa sequentes.

famous satirical *chanson* written by a priest. King Robert had divorced his wife; the country was under an interdict; and the blame was put upon Count Landri of Auxerre, the reputed lover of the queen. Neither clergy nor people saw why they should be under interdict because Robert had parted with his wife, whom they believed to be unworthy of him; so they sang the song of Landri throughout the country, and even jested at the expense of the Pope. One of Abelard's disciples, Hilarius, wrote a chorus *de Papa Scholastico;* having, of course, the additional incitement of his master's condemnation by Rome. This, too, is in Latin, though it has a Romance refrain.

"To give to the Pope is no disgrace;
Shame to him who gives not.
The Pope, having a fancy, deceives man and woman,
The Pope takes what he will to his bed,
The Pope passes over neither man nor woman.
Give to the Pope, for the Pope enjoins it;
Shame to him who gives not." [1]

We shall find more of this kind later on, for the French genius greedily caught the infection.

The north had other ample justifications for the employment of this two-edged blade of literature. "There life is hard and laborious, the social distinctions are deeply marked. At the top a haughty aristocracy, powerful, oppressive, which cannot forget its conquest; beneath, the vast crowd of tributaries, serfs, victims. There the townsman is less rich, less dignified, less full of himself, than in the south; but if he has

[1] "Papae dari non est injuria,
Tort a qui ne li dune.
Papa captus hunc vel hanc decipit,
Papa quid vult in lectum recipit,
Papa nullum vel nullam excipit,
Papae detur, nam Papa praecipit;
Tort a qui ne li dune."

more misery he will have more malice. Look at the old towns of the north; theirs are not the stone cities of Languedoc and Provence, nor the merchants' embattled towers, nor the luxury of eastern commerce. No; but low and humble cots, built of wood, with their disgraceful sheds and their gables staring awkwardly down on the streets. Petty workmen, petty shopkeepers, often also petty minds, embittered by suffering, and for that reason more apt to speak ill, and to look at things on their narrow and ridiculous side. These poor folks will be none the less for that the fathers of the *communes*, the saviours of France at Bremneville. They sweat, they suffer, pour forth their money with a groan, and, if need be, their blood, to secure a spark of liberty, to have a bell to themselves, the great tongue of the city. And what a pleasure by night, when all is well closed, when the fire crackles on the hearth, what a pleasure, before a mug of cider or claret, to make merry at the expense of the lord whose black and threatening castle rises beside them! On this soil are to flourish all the graces, the simplicities, and the archness of the Gallic spirit."[1] Champagne, Normandy, Picardy, were especially the provinces wherein the more comic and satirical vein of French literature first displayed itself, and where also the bitterest side of the French character was impressed upon the trouvères.

Thibaut IV., Count of Champagne, a knight who had perforce followed the King of France in the ruthless expedition against the Albigenses,[2] was bitterly ashamed of his part in the bloody work, and earned partly his absolution by denouncing it in burning words :—

> " They are clergymen who have left their sermons
> To wage war and to kill the people ;
> Never in God did such men believe.
> Our head makes all the limbs to suffer . . .

[1] Lenient, *La Satire en France au Moyen Âge.* [2] 1225.

Hypocrites cause the age to stagger . . .
They have taken away joy, and pleasure, and peace." [1]

We have seen already that the war against the Albigenses had aroused the ire of the troubadours. An epoch of French literature commences with these persecutions and these poetic protests. From that time forward, the corruptions of the Church were never without a satirist.

Thibaut deserves another word before we leave him. He was a kind of French Fitz-Osbert; a nobleman who roundly accused the barons of causing half the ills of their country; a democratic aristocrat who could sing:—

"In the time full of felony,
Of envy and of treason,
Of wrong and of contempt,
Without good and without courtesy,
And when between us barons we make
The whole age grow worse,
When I see excommunicated
Those who give the most cause
Then wish I to sing a song." [2]

Of course he fell into great disfavour, and as he had a more tender side to his character than is above displayed, he was

[1] "Ce est des clers qui ont laisié sermons
Pour gerroier et pour tuer les gens;
Jamais en Dieu ne fust tels homes créans,
Notre chief fait tous les membres doloir . . .
Papelars font li siècle chanceler . . .
Ils ont tolu joie, et solas et pais."

The "chef" was Pope Innocent III. The "clers" and "papelars" were the Cistercians and Dominicans, who preached the "Holy war" against the Albigenses.

[2] Au tens plein de félonie,
D'envie et de traïson,
De tort et de mesprison,
Sans bien et sans cortoisie,
Et que entre nos barons faisons
Toit le siècle empirier,
Que je vois escumenier
Ceux qui plus offrent raison,
Lors veuil dire une chançon.

attacked on that side. He wished to retire to his estates, but the king would not permit him. Shortly afterwards, Louis VIII. died at Montpensier,[1] and there were instant accusations against Thibaut of having poisoned him. Blanche of Castile, the dowager queen, became regent; she had not been popular before, and Thibaut had, in his verses at least, manifested great tenderness for her. Both became the mark for rancour, variously expressed by word and by act. Hue de la Ferté, fond of rhyming and fighting, assailed Thibaut with bitterness, and did not even spare the mother of Saint Louis, against whom little can be alleged except the indiscretions of her admirer. In one of his *chansons* Hue wrote:—

> "Count Thibaut, all covered with envy,
> Laden with felony,
> For chivalry
> You are in no way renowned,
> On the contrary, you are better formed
> To know surgery;"[2]

meaning of course the surgery of poison. In a later *chanson* he addresses the young Louis, exhorting him to cast off the domination of priests and women, and rely on his barons, who would aid him in driving out the English:—

> "Make the clergymen to go
> And sing in their churches.
> King, the prophecy
> Spoken does not lie,
> That such a woman knows to hurt
> Who knows to love her barons."[3]

[1] 1226.

[2] "Quens Tibaut, doré d'envie
De félonie frêté,
De faire chevalerie
N'estes vos mie alosé,
Ainçois estes mieux mollés
A savoir de sirurgie."

[3] "Faites les clers aler
En lor église chanter.
Rois, la prophécie
Qu'on dit ne ment mie,
Que feme sut ceus grever
Qui ses barons sot amer."

Thibaut has yet to be studied in another phase of his character; he encouraged the Crusades, and went himself to the Holy Land. He wrote several lays full of religious fervour,[1] of one of which we give two stanzas:—

"Take him, O Lord! who shall go
To that land where God died and lived;
But those who will not take the cross to go beyond the sea
Shall scarcely ever go to paradise.
But such as have compassion, and remember
Our mighty Lord, should seek for vengeance
And free his land and his country. . . .
God for us suffered on the cross,
And shall say on that day, to which all must come,
'Ye, who have helped to bear the rood for me,
Ye to that place shall go where angels dwell,
You shall see me there, the Holy Virgin too;
And ye, by whom I never had aid
Descend ye all into the deep of hell.'"[2]

Queen Blanche lives in another famous but anonymous poem of the same or immediately succeeding age; being pilloried as Dame Hersent, the brazen wife of Wolf Ysengrin, in the *Roman de Renart*. This *fabliau*, this burlesque poem, this

[1] Perhaps Dante, in his *Inferno*, c. xxii. calls him for this reason "buon re Tebaldo."

[2] "Signor, saciez, ki or ne s'en ira
En cele terre, u Diex fu mors et vis,
Et ki la crois d'outre mer ne prendra,
A paines mais ira en paradis:
Ki a en soi pitié et ramembrance
Au haut Seignor, doit querre sa vengeance,
Et déliverer sa terre et son païs . . .
Diex se laissa por nos en crois pener,
Et nous dira au jour, ou tuit venront,
'Vos, ki ma crois m'aidates à porter,
Vos en irez là, ou li Angele sont,
Là me verrez, et ma Mère Marie;
Et vos, par qui je n'oi onques aie,
Descendez tuit en infer le parfont.'"

epic *pour rire*, however we may prefer to describe it, though of German origin, became at once vastly popular in France, and was translated before many years had passed into almost all the languages of western Europe. The reason was that satire, from being an instinct and a necessity in the Middle Ages, was becoming an art. The conditions of society, ecclesiastical corruption and public opinion, were much the same in each country, and France did but lead the van in this particular method of attacking grave and undisputed evils. The Church itself set the example of this new species of warfare which it was destined to find so formidable, and the temptation to indulge in satire was yielded to in religious ceremonies and in the sacred edifices almost as freely as in *sirventes* and *fabliaux*. Sculptors did not hesitate to adorn the cathedrals with all the quaint devices which a riotous imagination could suggest. Picture a venerable priest expounding the sacred texts to his lighthearted congregation from the cathedral pulpit at Strasburg, and striving to gain their attention and good humour by coarse jests and questionable allusions. Staring him in the face from the capital of a column opposite, he would be able every now and then to refresh his mind and stimulate his imagination by the sight of an ass performing the sacrament of the mass, with other animals standing round to assist him; whilst in another place he might detect a priest, with the head of a fox, ensconced in the pulpit; not to speak of the carved representations of a hundred trivial and licentious acts. If this was the limit which the Church imposed upon itself, what wonder if the man of letters adopted a similar plan, without much caring where he drew the line!

The apologue of the fox and his companions, *Goupil le Renard*,[1] was added to from time to time, until at last it

[1] "Vulpes Reginardus" would represent the primary forms of the two names.

formed a gigantic story of four-and-twenty thousand verses.[1] The entire satirical faculty of more than a century may be considered to have been concentrated in this popular and highly edifying *fabliau*. It is, in effect, an epic satire on feudal society, which never failed, in any age, to provide original types of Isengrin the wolf, Tibert the cat, Renard the fox, and—let us be candid—Noble the lion. Throughout the whole romance we never lose sight of the central figure of Renard, impersonation of cunning holding its own against force, who, losing his individuality whilst retaining his spirit, reappears in succeeding generations as the familiar Scapin or Mascarille. It is probable enough that the original fable had a German source, as Jacob Grimm has maintained; but the fact remains that the earliest manuscripts date only from the twelfth century, and that they are in the language of northern France.

The roman of *Renard* comprises some thirty different stories, whereof the authorship of no more than four is known. Two are the works of Pierre de Saint Cloud, one of the curé de la Croix en Brie, the other of Richard de Lison. Much, however, of the best poetry and the most striking situations is due to the anonymous trouvères, from one of whom we may borrow a short passage. Chantecleer, having lost a daughter by the treachery of Renard, complains to the king of the beasts, who, moved with pity, sets his court trembling by his rage, "quant braïre oirent lor seignor." He vows vengeance against the murderer, and sends Bruin the bear, Tibert the cat, and Guimbert the badger, one after the other, to summon him to Court. The first two return unsuccessful, and in sorry plight; the third is more fortunate, and brings the caitiff with him. A dozen accusers are eager to heap

[1] *Le Couronnement de Renard, Renard le Nouvel, Renard contrefait, Renard le Bestonné.*

charges upon Renard, who in the end is condemned to be hanged.

"On a high hill, upon a rock,
The king sets up the gallows-tree
To hang Renart the fox.
There was he in great peril;
The ape made a grimace at him,
Gave him a great blow on the cheek.
Renart looks behind him,
Sees that more than three are coming on him
One drags him, the other pushes him,
No wonder if his heart misgives him.
Coward the hare threw stones at him
From afar, but did not come near.
At the stones that Coward threw
Renart shook his head.
Coward thereat was so alarmed
That he was no more seen.
He was dismayed by the gesture he had seen,
Then hid he himself in a hedge.
From thence, it is said, he watched
What punishment might overtake him."[1]

The crafty Renard escapes death by volunteering to go to the Holy Land. Doubtless the fable was true to the life; but he only intends to trick the king, as he has tricked so many of his subjects. Once free, he shuts himself in his castle at

[1] "Sor un haut mont en un rochier
Fet li rois les forches drecier,
Por Renart pendre le Gorpil.
Estes le vos en grant péril.
Li singes li a fet la moe,
Grant coup li done lez la joe.
Renart regarde arere soi,
Voit que i viegnent plus de troi;
Li un le trait, l'autre le bote,
N'est merveille seil se dote.
Coars li lievres l'arochoit
De loin, que pas ne l'aprochoit.
A l'arochier qu'a fet coart
En a crollé le chief Renart.
Coarz en fu si esperduz
Que onques puis ne fu véuz;
Del signe qu'ot véu, s'esmaie,
Lors s'est muchez en une haie:
D'ilor, ce dist, es gardera
Quel justise l'en en fera."

Malpertuis, whither Noble, the lion, comes to besiege him. Renard is taken in a sortie, but again makes shift to escape his doom, and lives to thrive and cheat again, and to create incidents for many other pleasant episodes in his career.

CHAPTER II.

§ 1. The Decline of the Trouvères.

The reign of Saint Louis[1] marks an important epoch in the history, language, and literature of France. Grandson of Philip Augustus, son of the noble Queen Blanche of Castile, whom Thibaut of Champagne chose to commemorate in so equivocal a manner, Louis IX. succeeded his weak father at the age of twelve, and might, but for his heroic mother, have succumbed to the determined opposition which he found arrayed against him. The haughty barons had for some time past been growing more and more alarmed by the gradually increasing authority of the kings of France, and the year before Louis VIII. died—poisoned, as his friends gave out, by Thibaut—Pierre de Dreux, regent of Brittany, had made a league with the English, in the hope of restoring the waning influence of his order. Not more than four or five great feudatories stood by the young monarch; but his own nobility of character, his piety and tact, the wisdom of the dowager queen, and the fidelity of his friends, sufficed to overcome all opposition. Nevertheless it was not until sixteen years had passed that the barons finally abandoned their efforts to overthrow him. Before he died he had beaten the English more than once in the open field; he had placed his brother Alphonse, Count of Poitiers, in the lordship of Poitou and Auvergne; he had established his younger brother,

[1] He reigned from 1226 until 1270, and was only eleven years old when he came to the throne.

Charles of Anjou, in Provence; he had fought in two Crusades; he had brought to a close the sanguinary religious wars in the south; and he had done more to pave the way for a united and powerful France than any of his predecessors. It was during his reign that the Romance tongue was discouraged and the Romance literature of the troubadours began to fall into oblivion; and it was in his reign likewise that the French of the north became gradually acknowledged as the master tongue of the whole country, whilst its literature as steadily deteriorated.

We have seen how far Thibaut of Champagne departed from the spirit of the older trouvères, and how much his audacious and occasionally ribald verse—I do not speak of his religious lays—contrasted with the dignity of the epic cycles, and with the purity of the Court of Saint Louis. We have seen how the quaint poem of *Renard* and the earlier *fabliaux* had begun to depress the character of the literature which is associated with the *langue d'oïl* in its primary periods. Let us turn to a poem of a trouvère of the decadence, a poem of great exquisiteness in style and treatment, with a subject to some extent moulded upon a classical model wholly profane and worldly—the *Roman de la Rose* of Guillaume de Lorris.[1] It is an *Ars Amandi*, couched in the allegorical language of a Middle-Age morality, in form a romance, but in reality a didactic poem on the art of successful love. Its impersonations recall to mind the entities and quiddities of the schoolmen; its nomenclature anticipates, as it may have contributed to suggest, the characters of the *Faery Queene;* its plan and treatment are not dissimilar to those of the *Flower and the Leaf.* We are scarcely able from beginning to end to pass from the domain of ideas to that of actual persons and things; the *theory* is present with us throughout, and we are conscious that the author does not himself succeed in translat-

[1] Died about 1260.

ing it into practice. It is manifest that we cannot exaggerate the importance of a poem such as this, which in a manner links the ideas of the Classical age with the ideas of the Renaissance, and in particular with the ideas of the Renaissance in England, and of its great precursor Chaucer.

The allegory itself is slight. Guillaume travels in a dream towards the Garden of Love, presided over by Pleasure. On its lofty walls are represented Hate, Disloyalty, Avarice, Villany, Greed, Envy, Sadness, Old Age, Hypocrisy, Poverty, to signify that there is no admission for such. The only entrance is by a small gate, whereat the votary of Love knocks timidly. It is opened by Leisure, who admits the applicant on the strength of his prepossessing appearance. Inside he finds Pleasure, Mirth, Love; and in the place of honour Beauty, Wealth, Jollity, Liberality, Frankness, Courtesy, and Youth. The lover is ravished by sweet sights and sounds; he wanders amongst the beautiful flowers which embellish the garden. At the fountain of Narcissus he learns to shun the fate of him who made light of the power of Love; and whilst he is penetrated by this thought he comes upon the Rose, emblem of loveliness, and his heart is subdued. Love himself now pierces the prostrate youth with his arrows, and gains in him a new subject. The conqueror instructs his victim in the art of gaining the object of his desires, and the lover's first efforts are encouraged by Good Reception. But Authority[1] frowns upon him, and Reason vainly tries to inspire the lover with his frigid philosophy. Good Reception enables him to elude Authority, and contrives an interview. This first success brings him into new trouble, for Jealousy comes between him and the Rose, and even casts Good Reception into prison. And there the allegory, so far as

[1] *Dangier* in the original—the same root from which we have "domain" and "dungeon"—meant "power" or "jurisdiction." The lover's enemy is the father, the duenna, those to whom the object of his passion pertains, and who oppose his suit.

Guillaume de Lorris conceived it, leaves the dreamer sighing at the foot of the tower where his friend is in durance. The break is an abrupt one, and it is impossible for us to feel certain whether it was made designedly by the author or caused by his early death, or whether the original continuation has been lost. Forty years later, at the instigation of Philip the Fair,[1] the *Roman de la Rose* was completed by Jean de Meung, who, as we shall find, had virtues of his own, but who did not succeed in catching the spirit, perhaps not even the idea, of his predecessor.

To Guillaume de Lorris and his successors there can be no doubt that Chaucer owed much of his inspiration; and the style of the *Roman de la Rose* every now and again brings forcibly to the mind of the reader some of his happiest reminiscences of the English poet, who wrote more than a century later. The very opening of the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* would almost seem to have been modelled upon the first few lines of the older poem.

"Whan that Aprile with his showres swote
The drought of Marche hath perced to the rote . . .
Whan Zephirus eek with his swote breeth
Enspired hath in every holte and heeth
The tendre croppes . . .
And smale fowles maken melodie,
That slepen all the night with open yhe,
So priketh hem nature in here corages." . . .

The *Roman de la Rose* opens in a somewhat similar vein:—

"El tems amoreus plein de joie,
El tems où tote riens s'esgaie,
Que l'en ne voit boisson ne haie
Qui en mai parer ne se voille
Et covrir de novele foille . . .
Li rossignos lores s'efforce
De chanter et de faire noise;

[1] 1285-1314.

Lors s'esvertue et lors s'envoïse
Li papegaus et la kalandre . . .
Moult a dur cuer qui en mai n'aime,
Quand il ot chanter sus la raime
As oisiaus les dous chans piteus." [1]

There is indeed nothing better in the Frenchman's poem than his description of Nature in her lovely and peaceful moods. For the rest, the allegory is long and vague, diffuse and monotonous; it is learned, revealing a considerable knowledge of human nature, and of Ovid in particular amongst those who have analysed humanity; but its design is evidently not clearly conceived, and still less ably executed. Its sketches of character are well drawn; as good, and perhaps even better, than the same characters were subsequently portrayed by Spenser. There is a pungency of satire in Guillaume de Lorris to which the author of the *Faery Queene* could never attain; it was approximately the difference between a cultivated Frenchman of the thirteenth century and a cultivated Englishman of the sixteenth. Nothing could be finer than the touches whereby de Lorris makes Avarice stand out from the canvas.

"Avarice held in her hand a purse, which she was drawing back, and she knotted it so tightly that it took a long time before she could get anything out of it; but she had nothing else to do."

[1] *Roman de la Rose*, ed. Méon, v. 49, *et passim*. We give here Chaucer's translation of the few lines quoted above from the opening of the original poem: —

. . . "In tyme of love and jolite
That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
For ther is neither busk nor hay
In May, that it nyl shrouded bene
And it with newe leves wrene . . .
Than doth the nyghtyngale hir myght
To make noyse, and syngen blythe,
Than isblisful many sithe
The chelaundre and the papyngay.
Than yonge folk entenden ay
For to ben gay and amorous,
The tyme is than so saverous."

Hypocrisy (*Papelardie*) is no less vividly depicted:—

"She appears a holy creature; but there is no evil practice under heaven which she does not meditate in her heart. . . . She carries a psalm-book in her hand, and be assured that she puts herself to great trouble to make feigned prayers to God."

Observe that the art of writing—or at all events the art of writing didactically—was in its infancy in France in the time of Guillaume de Lorris; the blending of fiction and instruction is not well done, and the design is not, as it would be in the present day, concealed from the eyes of the heedless. In this respect perhaps Guillaume de Lorris is excelled by Jean de Meung; who, on the other hand, wearies us with his monotonous display of learning, which is as recondite as it is often inapplicable or without force. Cicero, Nero, Crassus, Heraclitus, Suetonius, Diogenes, Claudian, Livy, Sisigambis, Virginius, Boetius, are dragged in, ostensibly to point a moral, either by their lives or by their words; and few, in all probability, have been the readers who have displayed more patience under Dame Reason's long harangues than the hero of the allegory himself. But this boast of erudition of old Jean Clopinel (the Lame one), as his contemporaries christened him, may be pardoned on account of the relish with which he attacked the vices and abuses of his time. If he is below Guillaume de Lorris in poetic elevation and beauty, he is undoubtedly above him in moral courage, and perhaps also in didactic force. Jean de Meung was a scientist, too, in his way; and there is a gleam of philosophic inspiration in the passages wherein he treats of such subjects as alchemy, astrology, and the operations of nature. One of his best pieces of work is the scene in which he represents nature, busied in the conservation of the material universe. She labours, he tells us, in renewing the type of all that fall victims to death; whilst art, the feeble imitator of nature, is on his knees, copying her processes, and attempting to counterfeit her works. But he is

ever far behind her, in spite of his cogitations and persistence. Whether he paints, forges, or moulds, whether he fashions fully-equipped knights, quadrupeds, birds, flowers, plants, or fish, graceful dames or handsomely dressed ladies, all this can but produce an imperfect and lifeless image of the works of nature. Guillaume de Lorris attempts no such flights as this. His four thousand verses contain more clear portraiture and exuberant fancy than the eighteen thousand of his continuator; but he must yield the palm to Jean de Meung, not only in bitter sarcasm and licentious allusion, but also in philosophical reach and in practical effectiveness. The latter part of the poem, in fact, created a more than literary sensation on its first appearance. Jean was a reformer and a democrat; his work was denounced from the pulpits which he had satirised, and banned in the polite society which his strictures had outraged. Apparently he did not think that zeal for natural morality was worth retaining at the expense of all that was pleasant and comfortable in life, for he retracted in old age the opinions which had gained him so many enemies in his youth.

In this Chaucer resembled him; and it is by no means the only point in which the English poet resembles Jean de Meung and his fellow-trouvères. The romantic poems of Chaucer, indeed, breathe throughout the spirit of the French *chansons* and *fabliaux*, of which he was manifestly a close and loving student. He must have had a special admiration for the *Roman de la Rose*, which he carried so far as to translate, or rather paraphrase, some seven thousand seven hundred lines. How he has fulfilled his task we may judge in some measure by comparing the version which we have already given.

It would be a long task, and hardly within the scope of our present design, however pleasant it might be to discharge, if we were to institute a full comparison between the romantic writings of Chaucer and of the French trouvères. Every student of the two literatures must have been struck by the

phenomenon of their close resemblance; a resemblance which extends to both *genres* of French poetry—to the lyrical exquisiteness of the troubadours as well as to the exuberant imagination of northern romance. And indeed there is nothing in this approximation of taste and treatment which can in any manner surprise us, when we consider the intimate relations between the two countries, the identity of language, and at times of individuals, through whose mediation the poetic fervour of the age has been transmitted to posterity. It is useful to dwell upon this approximation of literary taste, as displayed in particular by the authors of the *Roman de la Rose* and by Geoffrey Chaucer, because it forms, in more senses than one, a common starting-point for the poetic development of France and of England. And perhaps we may discover, in the manner and method of Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, some indication of the contrasted national characteristics, and of the divergences which were thereafter to carry the two literatures so far apart.

Mark how these three men—Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meung, and Geoffrey Chaucer—were severally the creatures of their past, the exponents of their present, the creators of their future. Observe, in the first, how this overflowing force and vigour of lusty life, born of the joyousness of the older trouvères and of his own ardent imagination, was held within certain bounds of propriety by the conditions amidst which he lived. His years were much the same as those of Saint Louis; his mother had had before her eyes the example of Blanche of Castile—one of those mothers who have done so much to purify and ennoble the world, because, in the face of temptations and trials to which the majority of our race so easily succumb, they have trained from the cradle to the height of the world's ambition a pure and noble son. The innocent boyhood, the studious and conscientious youth, the meek and magnanimous manhood of the flower of French

monarchs, formed a grand type for the imitation of his subjects; and, if we may judge from his writings, the example had not been lost upon Guillaume de Lorris. His pictures are rarely, if ever, such as would shock the eyes of those for whom he wrote them; he strove to please the grateful and the refined, not to outrage them, nor yet violently to mould them into another shape. The sap is there, abundant and with difficulty restrained; but it never breaks through and disfigures the delicate bark of the fair straight tree. Jean de Meung lived in another epoch, and was altogether a different kind of man. Deformed, apparently, in his person, the mind seems to have acquired the body's twist, and to have thirsted instinctively for revenge against those who were not responsible for his misfortune. Moreover, the interval of forty years had done much to alter the complexion of society in France, and that considerably for the worse. Louis had been zealous for religion, he had materially assisted the aggrandisement of the Papacy, and he had kept his subjects continually at his own high level of religious, if somewhat stern and cruel zeal. But, the temporal power of the Popes once established, faith decreased, an almost irresponsible priesthood became a prey to great abuses; and, on the other hand, the ambitious Philip the Fair set himself to improve upon the work of his sainted predecessor, making the ecclesiastical subservient to the political, and elevating civil duties above religious. He had sufficient influence over the Pope to constrain him to transfer his court from Rome to Avignon; and, little as he seems to have really cared for literature, he contrived to bend even the poets and philosophers to his will. It is said that Jean de Meung undertook the completion of the *Roman de la Rose* at the instigation of Philip; and undoubtedly the doctrines inculcated by the second portion of this poem, which extol industry, free and generous living, the begetting of children, as amongst the greatest virtues, are precisely such as would

accord with the far-reaching designs of the monarch. He, moreover, chose his instrument discreetly, for Jean was well calculated to preach this novel gospel of nature, and to impress his generation with a sense of its desirableness. We may indeed be permitted to feel a doubt on the subject of the royal commission in face of the somewhat subversive ideas of civil obligations and of royalty in which the poet indulges; as witness the following account of the first king amongst men: "A great villain they elected amongst themselves, the most cowardly of all who were there, the stoutest and the greatest, and they made him prince and lord." If a few passages of this remarkable poem may be supposed to have been displeasing to Philip, there was much more which the latter must have found to his liking; whilst the objurgations of the scandalised churchmen, and the fact that Jean de Meung lived to repudiate many of the notions to which he had given utterance, are quite in consonance with the idea of his having taken a brief from the king. Certain it is that the poet was as natural an outcome of the age of Philip the Fair as Guillaume de Lorris was of the age of Saint Louis; whereas his reflex influence upon his age was infinitely greater.

Of his two originals, Chaucer decidedly preferred the first, both from the natural bent of his mind, and also because he would readily perceive that Englishmen would not tolerate the licence of Jean de Meung. The contemporaries of the English poet had their licentious tastes, which were gratified to the full in such stories as those of the "Miller of Trumpington" and "Hendy Nicolas." It was a greater licence, too, in its way, coarse, and with less wit, and brutalising. It was the rough licence of the alehouse clown, full of rude loud merriment, and a faithful picture enough of a familiar side of life. But it was not subtle and seductive; it did not deliberately aim at the loosening of social ties; it did not deny all truth and faithfulness to woman. It was one thing for Englishmen

to laugh at what actually existed, to make a passing jest of impurity—especially where the brunt of the ridicule fell upon a hypocrite or a double-dealer; but it was quite another thing to sit down and study the art of corrupting each man his neighbour's wife and daughters, or to set about destroying, in cold blood, the ideal purity of the weaker sex. Chaucer knew his countrymen well, and did not care to give them more than 3629 out of the 17,930 verses of Jean de Meung. He omits the democracy as well as the seductive indecency of his original; and in both cases he doubtless followed the lead of his personal taste, as well as of his literary judgment. He had been brought up at court, and was by training in harmony with the loyal aristocratic feeling of his day; and he was, moreover, in all probability, a Lollard, or at least a sympathiser with the Lollards, having married the sister of John of Gaunt's second wife, and being, we may presume, no little influenced by the opinions of that staunch patron of the religious purists. But indeed his genius was cast in a different mould from that of Jean de Meung, who was natural philosopher first, and romancist afterwards. Chaucer, like Guillaume de Lorris, was before all a romancist; and it is therefore perfectly natural that he should have reproduced the latter's verses with the greatest zest and completeness.

It is difficult to estimate the effect produced on the French national character, and on French literature of later ages, by the shrewd philosophy of Jean de Meung, of whom it has been justly said that his boldness of thought and expression far excels that of Voltaire. His work deserves yet more attention for this reason; for though he chose to tack it on to the *Roman de la Rose*, perhaps on account of the popularity of the latter, or because the allegorical form precisely suited his purpose, yet his scope and design were more extensive, and in some respects quite distinct from those of Guillaume de Lorris. He worked effectively upon his predecessor's models;

but his new impersonations were still more striking; Nature herself, and her priest Genius, are grand conceptions, by whose assistance he is enabled to weave a hundred theories, to expound a thousand ideas, and to multiply suggestions without end.

The earlier poem had left Good Reception in prison, and the lover spares no pains to deliver him. Love espouses his cause, and brings up an army to his assistance, amongst whom are False-Seeming and Abstinence. The former, having found an entrance into the tower, glozes over Evil Speaking, one of the guardians of Good Reception, and, after cutting out his tongue, slays him. The lover now draws near to the accomplishment of his desires, thanks to the assistance of an old duenna; but Authority, Fear, and Shame, come up in the nick of time and mar the plot. Love then resolves upon an assault, and is assisted in it by his mother Venus. It is at this point, whilst the battle rages, that Nature, distressed at the wholesale destruction of her children, laments her loss to Genius—much indeed as Philip the Fair may have represented the serious diminution of his subjects. Man alone, says Nature, disobeys the law imposed upon him. The stars revolve, the brutes follow their instincts; man goes forth to war, or dies in idleness, before providing for the reproduction of his species. We cannot here develop the theories and suggestions of our mother Nature, as interpreted for her by Jean de Meung, and by a few of our own contemporaries, under such names as the rehabilitation of humanity, natural selection, and the like. The curious reader may find occasion to see for himself how the French philosopher has handled the subject of which Ovid made an art, and Lucretius a religion.[1]

Guillaume's rough sketch of hypocrisy in Papelardie,

[1] "Toutes (femmes) estes, serés, ou futes
De faict ou de volonté putes;
Et qui bien vous en chercheroit,
Toutes putes vous trouveroit."

which was destined to be refined into Molière's Tartuffe, just as his Avarice was to become Harpagon, did not satisfy Jean de Meung; and, as has been acutely said,[1] False-Seeming (*Faux-Semblant*) was the symbol, and Tartuffe the type, of what in Papelardie was a simple allegory. De Meung's is a fine creation, and is by no means the mere impersonation of our modern and respectable virtue of hypocrisy. He is rather the worldly-minded, chapel-going, money-making man or woman of the nineteenth century; not so much cloaking his vices under an assumption of virtue, as displaying his deliberate acceptance of conventional false appearances as a thing that will "pay." He is always unmasking out of sheer bravado, and makes no secret of his tastes and preferences. "I dwell," he informs us, "amongst the proud, the impostors, the cunning, who covet worldly honour, and profit by great undertakings, and go in search of grand feasts, and compass the acquaintance of powerful men, and hang on to them, and make out that they are poor, and so live upon fine delicate scraps, and drink costly wines; and go about preaching poverty, and fishing for great wealth." Mr. Harold Skimpole has caught a trick or two of Faux-Semblant, as also Mr. Bounderby, and many others who might be named. Not Pecksniff, who is too purely hypocritical to confess as much. It is true that Faux-Semblant can don the hood and cowl of Papelardie on occasion, in order the more easily to snare his usual prey—the simple and cowardly among his fellow-creatures; but as a rule he prefers the bounce of professed selfishness. "When I see all these beggarly rascals," he says again, "shivering in these filthy dunghills, snivelling and whining with cold and hunger, I do not meddle with their private concerns." Hypocrisy is his art, not his nature; a weapon which he can take and lay aside rather than a character of which he cannot divest himself.

[1] M. Géruzez, *Histoire de la Littérature française*, vol. i., p. 134.

Would he know the weak points of his fellow-creatures? "For the salvation of souls, I inquire of lords and ladies, and of all their household, concerning their property and their lives." Would he satisfy his curiosity from the fountain-head? "I am wont to reveal to them, without reservation, the secrets of others; and they also tell me everything, concealing nothing whatever." He does not trouble to do this with the poor and uninfluential, but with the rich and powerful; and he finds it pay. "There is no prelate who dare injure or insult my friends, for I have surely closed their mouths." Who does not recognise Faux-Semblant amongst his intimate acquaintances—the "over good-natured" with whom it is fatal even to gossip; from whom you cannot listen to a commonplace tale without thenceforth being at the mercy of their tongue; to know whom is to lay up for yourself a mysterious retribution, coming how and when you know not, but coming surely, as a punishment for having failed in the art of discriminating character. Jean de Meung might be a satirist of the nineteenth century.

§ 2. The Roystering Trouvères.

We have advanced a little in the engaging company of the continuator of de Lorris, and must return to the reign of Saint Louis in order to exchange a word with Rutebeuf,[1] a roysterer among the roysterers, type and precursor of many a witty-tongued, empty-pocketed Parisian of the present day; in literary tone the forerunner of Villon; in self-railing, poverty-stricken genius, the poetic ancestor of Henri Murger. He sang for his bread, like the poorest of the old trouvères; but he had the salt of wit in greater abundance; and he struck more varied and more resonant strings than they. *Fabliaux*, war-songs, pious legends, personal panegyrics, all came in his way, for all brought him a trifle wherewith to

[1] He died at the end of the thirteenth century.

keep body and soul together; and it was worth his while keeping body and soul together, if only for the prospect of having one more throw with the dice, and singing, in some quiet corner, one more song that might pass sweetly between his lips. Misery was his bed-fellow, but never his verse-fellow. He could marry on nothing, and produce a family more easily than he could earn bread to keep them with, and yet sing in gaiety of heart: "Since Mary gave birth to our Saviour in a manger, never was seen such a marriage." His is a type of a certain French littérateur which we shall meet over and over again; and the prototype of the whole class is perhaps its best example.

France had been almost overdone with singing, and the line was no longer as profitable as it had been. The trouvère and his *vielle* had fallen into almost as much disrepute as the Savoyard and his hurdy-gurdy now enjoy in London streets. Philip Augustus had found them—or perhaps we ought to say the *jongleurs* and *charlatans*—so numerous throughout France that he caused many of them to be packed off beyond the frontiers. Their business became unprofitable by dint of too much free-trade. At Bologna they passed a law forbidding them to sing in the public places. Then the more capable amongst them, who were able to write as well as to sing, earned a precarious livelihood by inditing verses in honour of wealthy men, from whom they continued to get at least a little payment in kind, and an occasional turn of board and lodging. Such was the pass to which things had come in Rutebeuf's time; which was indeed a blessing in disguise, as may possibly have occurred to him now and then in his weary wanderings. For poetry is the stuff which is wont to show its merits under the test of adversity; and adversity gave the songs of our genial tramp what they might not otherwise have attained—immortality.

Rutebeuf is a figure on the stage of the thirteenth century.

Sprung, it seems, from the very ruts of the social highway, he came into the world with a tune in his throat as well as in his head, and this gained for him a little schooling amongst the choristers of some church in Champagne. The priests or monks taught him to sing and play ; and having pleased one or other of his masters or hearers, he was afterwards sent to the University of Paris, where he learned, amongst other things, how to gamble and fight. In book-learning he did not advance beyond the rudiments, and he left the university without taking his degree. So far, indeed, the picture might belong to our own day ; but now his career began in earnest; for his patron seems to have grown tired of him. However, Rutebeuf was a genuine musician ; he could bring music out of every known instrument, and his head was stored with songs and *fabliaux*, old and new. He took to the road forthwith ; and strange companions were some of those whom he encountered there. The highwaymen of the thirteenth century were not Claude Duvals ; and a minstrel to them was as lawful prey as any other—especially if he happened to be leaving a large town, with a moderately well-filled knapsack on his shoulders. There was nothing for it but to stand and deliver if you encountered one of these desperate gangs, for any attempt at resistance or concealment of valuables was pretty sure to be tortured, roasted, or boiled into submission. Rutebeuf was soon tired of vagrancy under these conditions. He settled in the capital, and applied himself more steadily than ever to gratify the political, religious, or artistic tastes of the rich and powerful ; preaching crusades for the king, versifying the lives of saints for the clergy, and immortalising dead nobodies to tickle the vanity of their heirs ; forgetting, for the time, the modesty which had formerly led him to depreciate himself.[1]

[1] We give Rutebeuf's self-depreciation in order to show how he could play on words, a taste very common in that age :—

"Rudes est et rudement euvre
Li rudes hons fait rude euvre . . .
Rudes est, s'a non Rudebeus."

Rutebeuf did not always place his pen at the service of the monks, whom he really hated, and against whom he was glad to fling an occasional rhyme. During the quarrel between Guillaume de Saint-Amour and Thomas Aquinas, he championed the cause of his university, and put into the students' mouths many a popular song, which earned for him the indirect censure of Pope Alexander IV. For when the latter issued a bull in condemnation of Saint-Amour, he added a word against certain pieces "composed in infamy, and to the discredit of the preaching brothers and inferior clergy, lately published in the common tongue, together with indecent rhymes and songs upon the same subject." Our poet's productions were many and of many kinds; and not a few of those which have been preserved bear witness to the power of his satire, which he was wont to embody in verses bearing the name of *Dits*, or in *fabliaux*.[1] He was, moreover, one of the earliest French comedy-writers, as we shall presently find. And yet, with all this industry and brainwork, which might have placed a prudent man far above the reach of want, he was in a state of periodic poverty and wretchedness; the reason whereof he does not hesitate to inform us, saying that "the dice which the dice-maker has made have cleared me out of my wardrobe, the dice kill me, the dice lay in wait for me and spy me out, the dice attack me and defy me; that weighs me down." Or again, reduced in old age to a late respectability, holding himself up as a warning to others in the following pathetic words;—which, indeed, he might reasonably have withheld, seeing that there were none amongst his hearers with sufficient genius to "be his parallel":—

> "My pots are broken and shivered,
> And I have spent all my days . . .
> If ever man has prayed for the dead

[1] Among the *Dits* the *Dit de l'Ozil*, the *Dit des Jacobins*, the one of the *Cordeliers*, and of the *Mensonge;* and among the fabliaux, *Le Testament de l'Asne* and *Charlot le Juif* seem to deserve their former reputation.

Let him pray for me . . .
I am exhausted if I am moved . . .
Know ye how I pass my time?
The hope in to-morrow
Such are my feasts.
One would think I was a priest,
For I make more men cross themselves,
(It is no sin),
Than if I were preaching the gospel.
Men cross themselves all over the town
At the spectacle I present,
Which ought to be told as a story by night,
For there is nought like it . . .
God has no martyr on his roll
Who has suffered as much.
If they have been slain for God
Burned, stoned, or betrayed,
I make no doubt at all
That their punishment was soon at an end.
But this will endure as long as I live."[1]

The reader will have observed that, if the poetic brilliancy of the age of the trouvères was becoming dim towards the close of the thirteenth century, it was at the same time disappearing with many splendid coruscations of light, destined indeed to flicker low upon the ashes of the altar, but destined also to be fanned anew into a brighter and more consuming

[1] "Mes pos est brisiez et quassez
Et j'ai tos mes jors passez . . .
S'onques nus hom por mort pria
Si pri por moi . . .
Je n'en puis mès si je m'esmoi . . .
Saves coment je me demain?
L'espérance de l'endemain
Ce sont mes festes.
L'en cuide que je soie prestres;
Quar je fas plus sainier de testes
(Ce n'est pas guile)
Que se je chantaisse évangile.
L'on se saine parmi la ville
De mes merveilles,
On les doit bien conter aux veilles.
Il n'y a nules lor pareilles . . .
Diex n'a nul martyr en sa route
Qui tant ait fait;
S'ils ont esté por Dieu deffait,
Rosti, lapidé ou detrait,
Je ne dout mie
Que lor paine fu tost fenie;
Mais ce durra tote ma vie."

flame. Thibaut of Champagne himself was no mere trouvère; and one might quote many a lyric morsel from him and his contemporaries worthy to be compared with Rutebeuf's best. Gace Brulé and Gautier d'Argies wrote delicately enough at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and possibly owed no little of their grace of style to their acquaintance with the songs of the troubadours. Adam de la Halle, who died perhaps a year or two sooner than Rutebeuf, gives still clearer evidence of southern influence in his refined and easy *canchons, rondeaux,* and *partures* or *jeux-partis.* Two stanzas from his well-known *Congé,* in which he bids farewell to Arras, may serve as an example of the bright, nervous simplicity of thought, and the tender grace of expression to which the *langue d'oïl* of the thirteenth century lent itself in the mouths of the elegant and cultivated men of the time :—

" Arras! Arras! town of quarrels
And of hatred and of treason,
Which was once so noble,
Men go about saying that you are being restored;
But if God do not bring back the good (feelings),
I see not who is to reconcile you.
They love there too much heads or tails (money).
Every one deceives in this town
As much as he did in the spring that is past.
Farewell, more than a hundred thousand times!
Now will I go and listen to the gospel,
For here they know nought but to lie . . .
Fair and very sweet beloved friend,
I cannot put on a joyful face,
For more in grief from you I part
Than from aught else I leave behind.
Of my heart be the guardian,
And the body shall go elsewhere
To learn and seek the means and art
Of being more worthy (of thee) . . .

In order to reap a better harvest later,
For three or four years
We let our land lie fallow."[1]

§ 3. Trouvères of the Fourteenth Century.

The lyrical trouvères of the fourteenth century might lay claim to a chapter on their own account, if only because they represent almost the sole surviving poetic spirit of France in an age of comparative literary sterility, when there was little besides them of freshness, beauty, or originality. Our limits, however, will not permit us to go at leisure over the ground occupied by Eustache Deschamps, himself a most prolific trouvère.[2] His friend Guillaume de Machault,[3] musician and poet, and the chronicler Froissart[4] himself, were his rivals in lyrical proficiency and prolixity. And the new or newly perfected styles were well suited to the not very sustained efforts of these poets. The ballad most in favour with the age consisted of two or more stanzas rhymed on an identical model, all ending with the same line. The *rondeau*, in its earlier shape, had eight lines, the first, fourth, and seventh being identical, as were the second and last. The *virelai* turned on two rhymes, of which the first had

[1] "Arras ! Arras ! ville de plait
Et de haine et de detrait,
Qui soliez être si nobile,
On va disant c'on vous refait ;
Mais se Diex le bien n'i ratrait,
Je ne voi qui vous reconcile.
On i aime trop crois et pile ;
Chascuns fuberte en ceste vile,
Au point c'on estoit a le mait.
Adieu de fois plus de cent mile !
Aillors vois oïr l'Evangile,
Car chi fors mentir on ne sait . . .
Bèle très douche amie chiere,
Je ne puis faire bele chiere ;
Car plus dolans de vous me part
Que de rien que je laisse arrière.
De mon cuer serés trésorière,
Et li cors ira d'autre part
Aprendre et querre engien et art
De miex valoir . . .
Pour miex fructefier plus tart,
De si au tiers an ou au quart
Laist on bien se terre en jachiere."

[2] He was born in 1320 and died at the beginning of the fifteenth century ; he was the author of the *Arte de Dictier et Fere Chançons, Balades, Virelais et Rondeaux*, published in 1392.

[3] 1290-1377.

[4] 1337-1410.

to predominate throughout the whole; the first verses were repeated together or separately, as often as necessary; hence the name.

The following is an excellent *rondeau* of de Machault's, which rings already with the mellow tone more perfectly attained a century or two later:—

"As white as a lily, more ruddy than the rose,
Brilliant as an oriental ruby;
In beholding your beauty without an equal,
As white as a lily, more ruddy than the rose,
I am so delighted that my heart always watches,
So that it may serve as a law for a true lover;
As white as a lily, more ruddy than the rose,
Brilliant as an oriental ruby."[1]

Deschamps will not be dismissed without another word, and his satirical vein, if nothing else, deserves it. Witness this letter to his father:—

"My dear father—I have not a penny, nor can I have unless you send it to me. Study is very costly. I cannot use my Code nor my Digest, because they are dropping to pieces. I owe the provost two crowns, and no one will lend me the money. The fact is, that if I am to continue my studies, you must send me money to buy books, to pay my fees, and to keep myself. I want decent dress, too; and if you do not want your son to appear a mere clown, you will send me money for that too. Wine is dear, lodgings are dear, everything is dear. I am in debt all round. I fully expect to be excommunicated, and I have already been summoned. If you do not send me money, I shall be most certainly turned out at Easter."[2]

[1] "Blanche com lys, plus que rose vermeille,
Resplendissant com rubis d'Oriant,
En remirant vo biauté non pareille,
Blanche com lys, plus que rose vermeille,
Suy si ravis que mes cuers toudis veille
Afin que serve à loy de fin amant,
Blanche com lys, plus que rose vermeille,
Resplendissant com rubis d' Oriant."

[2] Besant, *The French Humourists*, p. 82.

How nearly was the fourteenth century a counterpart of the nineteenth; except perhaps that the fourteenth was able to paint its pictures with fewer touches! Less like a counterpart is the scene in which Deschamps, then fifty-five years old, relates how he was admitted to an interview with Agnes of Navarre in her garden; on which occasion he had the prudence to take his secretary with him. The artless girl laid her head in the poet's lap and fell asleep. Whereupon the secretary placed a leaf upon her lips, and motioned to Deschamps to kiss the leaf. He did so; or rather he would have done so; but the secretary withdrew the leaf at the moment of impact, and the young princess awoke. "She said to me quite softly," continues the poet, "'My friend, you are very insulting; know you no other sport than that?' But the fair one broke into a smile with her lovely mouth; which gave me to imagine, and at all events to hope, that the thing did not displease her." Agnes married Gaston de Foix, and her history is sad enough to make us wish that it had stopped short at this point.

Meanwhile, behind and distinct from all these poetic outbursts of the national genius—except that mutual action and reaction maintained their never-ceasing laws, and that the history of literature and of civilisation reflects from one to the other the common light of human and national development—the State and the Church were gradually perfecting their organisation. Philip Augustus, Saint Louis, Philip the Fair, contributed each his share towards cementing and consolidating the inheritance of the Carlovingians and the Capets. The power of the monarchs had increased, the power of the barons had been restricted. The people lost almost as much as they gained by the subjection of the aristocracy; but the *communes* and municipalities little by little increased their quota of freedom. The royal prerogative was pushed far by Louis IX., and farther still, to the very verge of weakness, by

Philip the Fair; whilst the tendency of the third estate of the realm towards the democratic idea manifested itself even side by side with the decreasing influence of the *communes*. The Church, as we have already seen, raised to high authority and even civil dignity by Louis, had been shorn of much of its power under his high-handed grandson, but gradually regained it in the reigns of Philip's weaker successors, and during the hundred years' war between France and England. In the fourteenth century, French ecclesiastics bore themselves bravely before the civil power, and in the face of a spiritless and obedient people. The events which were so fatal to the unhappy House of Valois strengthened the hands of the Church; and the anarchy of France created for her an opportunity which she was not altogether incapable of seizing.

CHAPTER III.

§ 1. Prose-Writers of the Thirteenth Century.

In the infancy of every literature, which is also the infancy of a language, men of ardent imagination, who write what the most unlearned can readily understand, and who naturally seek a wide and popular audience, make use of the popular form of speech; whereas scholars who write for scholars, and neither expect nor seek a wide audience for their historic narratives and theological discussions, are wont to use the ancient tongue, which circumstances have contributed to make the classical, learned, or sacred form of speech. So it was between the Sanscrit and the younger Indian languages, between the Chaldean and younger Semitic languages, and, in Europe, between the Latin on the one hand and the neo-Latin and Teutonic languages on the other. It is not in itself a sufficient reason for, but it contributes to explain, the fact that the poetic literature of the French language preceded its prose literature by several centuries; whereas we have seen that the early prose-writers of Gaul who used the Latin language were both more numerous and more skilful than the Gallo-Roman poets of the earlier Christian centuries.

We must not overlook the fact that the vulgar tongue, the neo-Latin tongue, which was called *lingua romana*, to distinguish it both from pure Latin and from Teutonic, but which was not commonly known as French until the ninth century, had been from the fifth or sixth century the language of the

great majority of Frenchmen; that councils of French bishops, early in the ninth century, had ordered the Fathers to be translated into *lingua romana* for the use of "the people;"[1] that the same injunction was many times repeated during that and the two following centuries; by which time the Romance form of speech was the language of the Court and State in England,[2] in Spain, in Italy, and in Greece. Up to the fourteenth century, however, this popular form of speech, so far as prose is concerned, was rather a spoken than a written tongue; although it may be taken for granted that any language in common use, which was daily and familiarly spoken, must also occasionally have been written in prose. It is true that a large portion of the poetry of the trouvères would be, in the first instance, transmitted from memory to memory without the intervention of written documents, whereas the same method could not so easily be applied to prose; whilst the ready writers who were not poets would be mere copyists, or, if themselves producers, would, as a rule, be priests, monks, or professors in the universities and schools, and would consequently use Latin. Nevertheless, prose Romance documents, in addition to those above named, are to be met with from the eleventh century onwards. Godfrey of Bouillon caused the *Assises du Royaume de Jérusalem* to be written in French, and Thomas de Couci gives us in the same language the well-known law of Vervins. To Picardy the Abbé Lebeuf[3] attributes certain Romance translations of the *Book of Job*, the two *Books of the Kings*, and the *Dialogues of Saint Gregoire;* whereas in England we have prose Romance

[1] The Council of Tours, 813, "after having enjoined upon the bishops the use of the Patristic writings as being most indispensable to instruct the people committed to their charge in the principles of religion, required that each of them should translate or have them translated into the Romance or the Teutsch dialect, that all might the more readily listen to the truth which should be imparted to them."

[2] Under Edward the Confessor, 1043, and more completely after the Conquest.

[3] 1687-1760.

works from the pens of several of Henry Beauclerk's assistants, such as Wace, Walter Map, and Fantosme.

It was in the thirteenth century that Frenchmen began to write their history in their own tongue, and laid the foundations of what has since proved to be one of the characteristic excellences of French literature. Nursed by the grand epics in which their fathers and grandfathers had sung the glories of ancient and modern prowess, the noble adventures of chivalry, and the mighty exploits of kings, they began to record in serious earnest the events in which they had themselves borne part, and which they felt ought not to be lost upon their children. For the most part, doubtless, it was the men who thought themselves unequal to the task of writing a worthily-sustained poem to whom the idea first occurred of setting forth a matter-of-fact narrative in prose. Froissart, it is true, had an ardent poetic genius, but it was exclusively in the lyric vein, and he would have shrunk from the idea of composing his chronicles in verse. Naturally enough the historic narratives which claim our attention were, to begin with, simple and unambitious records, candid and even colloquial in style, and much in the manner of a protracted letter to a friend. When we think of the difficulties of this new departure, and the stedfast efforts necessary to overcome them, we have reason to be surprised at the readiness with which success was achieved. The special historic genius of the nation was manifested by Villehardouin, Joinville, and Froissart. In England the step from poetry to history was not so easily made ; English literature had many prose-writers before it acquired one respectable historian.

These were not, indeed, the earliest French historians even of the Middle Ages, for the cloister had already performed its part. But the monastic chroniclers would not or could not depart from their consecrated Latin, which, though it had its facilities, had also its restraints. And the monks, moreover,

wrote chiefly of events which they had never seen, sometimes of events which had never happened.[1] They wrote, again, with a predisposition to rely upon accepted traditions, and for readers whom they expected to take the truth of their narratives for granted. They were, in fact, monastic first and Frenchmen afterwards, and the breath of French historic genius barely deigned to assist them; whereas the truer historians whom we are about to study narrated the events of their own experience. Their scope was limited, and within that scope they were masters of their own powers; they undertook no more than they could firmly grasp, and what they undertook they felt themselves able to accomplish. In this they were but unwittingly adopting the plan which the Frenchman of to-day follows of set purpose. His circle must be drawn sharply, and his radius fixed; that done, his talent enables him to subdivide his ground, and to fill in his details with ease. The earlier historian had to do rather with a straight line than with a circle, but even there he was careful to mark his boundaries. The monks, on the other hand, neither realised nor cared to acknowledge the necessity of any limits to their talent; so that, although their chronicles serve a useful purpose, and although certain shorter and more personal narratives are valuable as historical memoirs, we possess no monastic history of the first rank. Gregory of Tours, Eginhard, the so-called Turpin, and Hincmar, have supplied many a fact which would otherwise have been lost to us; but their records are far from trustworthy. The patriotic labours of the Benedictines of the Abbey of Saint Denis, which have bequeathed to posterity an invaluable collection of historic documents, did much to redeem the cloister from the reproach which rests upon it; and Suger[2] himself, to whom the grand idea was

[1] The monastic chroniclers usually begin with the creation of the world, and work their way through much imperfect compilation before they arrive at their own times.

[2] A man of the people (1082-1152), who became Chancellor of St. Denis and the shrewd counsellor of Louis VI. and Louis VII.

probably duc, came nearest of all his order to the possession of the genuine historic gift. He wrote the annals of at least one of the reigns in which he occupied so prominent a position, but his narrative exhibits the dimness of perception which was fatal to all the monastic writers. After him came several other historians,[1] and, last of the Latin chroniclers, the anonymous author of the reign of Charles VI.[2] Rarely have these monastic records been translated, and still more rarely read, in their original form. Nevertheless, we must not quit the subject without rendering justice to the same Abbey of St. Denis, which gave the French in their own tongue a collection of the *Chroniques de France.*

The first French historian whose work was originally written in the common form of speech is also—and the fact must be emphasised as one of special significance—the first noteworthy writer of French prose. This was Geoffroy de Villehardouin, a soldier and diplomatist, who was born about the middle of the twelfth century, and who died in the year 1213. In 1199 he was sent by Thibault III. of Champagne to treat with the Republic of Venice for the passage of the troops of the fourth crusade through their country. He was himself a soldier of the Cross, and was present at the taking of Constantinople. These events he describes in his *Histoire de la Conquête de Constantinople*—the work of a soldier, simple if somewhat stiff in manner, bearing every mark of fidelity to fact, but not wanting in ambitious passages and in complacent efforts after rhetoric. Villehardouin probably thought he was writing a poem, and would, in any case, have held that the events recorded by him deserved a poetic dress as much as the subjects of the grandest *Chansons de Geste.* And yet he had the true feeling of the historian, giving us with great

[1] Rigord, Guillaume le Breton, the anonymous writer of the lives of Saint Louis and Louis the Bald, and Guillaume de Nangis, who brought his chronicle down to the year 1340.

[2] 1368-1422.

minuteness the enumeration of the hosts, the plans and deliberations of the chiefs, the position of the opposing armies, the varying fortunes of the struggle ; whilst he forgets neither the causes nor the issues of the war, so far as he was able to discern them. He is the Xenophon of his own history, having himself been an actor in all which he narrates ; a fact which adds a special freshness and vigour to his account. He was, as a consequence, more than the Mandeville of French prose, for his subject was more purely historical, and he had the art of laying down the model and practice of historic narrative. He had precisely that dignity which Froissart needed, though it was left to Froissart to excel him in graphic and picturesque description.

The nervous readiness with which our valiant soldier recounts the scenes he had passed through, makes his work interesting and readable down to the present day ; for one is carried along by natural sympathy with all his dangers, fears, and successes. The pilgrim army is before us as we read ; or rather it is beside us and behind us, whilst we smite down the paynim in the front of the battle. At every turn we hear the voice of the Christian warrior by our side. "Now hear one of the grandest marvels, one of the greatest adventures that you ever heard! . . . Now may you hear of great prowess! . . . Know that there was none so bold but his heart trembled! . . . Know that never was any town so proudly taken! . . . Know that God did never deliver any people from greater perils than he did the host on that day!" He is always bringing himself as witness to the truth of what he says ; and so great is the respect with which he inspires us that we readily accept the sufficiency of the confirmation. "So great was the booty made," he says, speaking of the capture of the city, "that none of you could tell the end of the gold and silver, and of the vessels and precious stones, and of samite, and of silken stuff, and of miniver and grey and ermine robes, and

all the valuable possessions which were ever found in the world. And Geoffroi de Villehardouin, the marshal of Champagne, solemnly bears witness to his knowledge of the truth, that, since the present age was in existence, never was so much gained in one town."

Villehardouin had, of course, the advantage of being perhaps first in the field of French historians, with none of the modes and mannerisms of predecessors which modern writers often find so troublesome. If he tells us anything of himself, or if he gives an opinion about the plans and actions of his fellow-leaders, or if he wishes to qualify or to confirm a statement, he does not wait to bring it in by way of digression, or add it in a note, or refer us to an appendix; but out comes his idea at the moment when it occurs to him, and, strange to say, it does not confuse the narrative, but manifestly assists and illumines it. "Many kept badly their promises," he says in one place, pausing in the description of a chain of circumstances to remark upon what subsequently happened, "and many were blamed for it." And again in a critical mood he says, "Know that such a one could do a great deal better."

His *History* is a trustworthy and lively picture of the times, and of the valorous barons and their retainers in particular, a few pages whereof tell us far more than a chapter of considerations drawn from the whole field of contemporary external history. It is a candid confession from the mouth of one of those famous knights of the Middle Ages, who would follow their chosen banner into the field, but would fight there as if each individual were the sole hope and stay of his cause. Discipline there might be amongst the inferior ranks; but amongst the superior little indeed, except the discipline of a common purpose, and of an ever-present religious obligation. Yet the latter was strong enough to assure a victory over hosts well calculated to inspire awe. The Christians had the ever-pre-

sent belief that their true leader was the God who had sent them forth to fight, and who was directing the battle from on high. The following passage expresses clearly enough the spirit which led the crusaders to victory :—

"The Emperor Morchufles had come to lodge, before the assault, in a place with all his army, and with all his red tents put up. Thus the affair lasted until Monday morning; and then were armed those vessels and transports and galleys. And those of the town feared them more than they did at first; they were so astounded, that upon the walls and upon the towers appeared nothing but men. And then began the ferocious and marvellous assault. And each vessel attacked straight before it. The cry of the noise was so great, that it seemed that the earth was going to be destroyed. Then the assault lasted long, so that our Lord for them raised a wind, which is called Boire, and brought the vessels and the transports more on the shore than they were before. And two ships which were tied together, of which one was called the Pilgrim and the other Paradise, approached so near the tower, the one on one side, the other on the other, as God and the wind led them, that the ladder of the Pilgrim was right against the tower, and now a Venetian and a French knight, who was named André d'Urboise, entered the tower." [1]

Eleven years after the death of Villehardouin was born another master of the art of prose, Jean de Joinville, of whom we shall presently have occasion to speak. But the annals

[1] "L'Emperères Morchufles s'ere venuz herbergier devant l'assaut en une place à tot son pooir, et ot tendues ses vermeilles tentes. Ensi dura cil afaires trosque lundi matin; e lors furent armé cil des nés et des vissiers et cil des galies. Et cil de la ville lès doterent mains que il ne firent à premiers; si furent si esbaudi que sor les murs et sor les tors ne paroient se genz non. Et lors commença li assaus fiers et merveilleus. Et chascuns vaissiaux assailloit endroit lui. Li huz de la noise fu si granz que il sembla que terre fondist. Ensi dura li assaus longement, tant que nostre Sires lor fit lever un vent, qu'on appelle Boire, et bota les nés et les vaissiaux sor la rive plus qu'ils n'estoient devant. Et deux nés qui estoient liées ensemble dont l'une avoit nom la Pelerine et l'aultre li Paravis, aprochièrent tant à la tor, l'une d'une part, et l'aultre d'aultre si com Diex et li venz li mena, que l'eschiele de la Pelerine se joinst à la tor, et maintenant uns Véniciens et uns chevaliers de France qui avait nom André d'Urboise entrèrent en la tor."

of the thirteenth century preserve the names of several other writers of French prose, to whom we may conveniently turn our attention in the meantime. Amongst the labours of the Abbey of Saint Denis, one of the most serviceable was the translation of the old Latin chronicles, a work undertaken by the monk Primat, at the suggestion of Matthieu de Vendôme, in the year 1274. The originals turned to account by Primat were very numerous ;[1] the translation was clearly and judiciously effected, and it has been largely drawn upon in every succeeding age for the materials of the early history of France. In the mere matter of style, it was not to be expected that Primat should display the same qualities which had distinguished Villehardouin ; nor indeed was it possible to aim at so high a model in what did not profess to be much more than a translation. But the language of these *Chroniques* is marked by precision and elegance of no mean order, as the following passage, which is the very beginning, will testify.

"Because several people doubted the genealogy of the kings of France, from what origin, from what family they have sprung, he (Privat) undertook to do this work, by the command of such a man whom he could not, nor ought, to refuse. . . . And this history shall be written according to the letter and arrangement of the chronicles of the Abbey of Saint Denis, where the history and the actions of all the kings are written. . . . For thence the origin of history must be drawn. And if he can find in the chronicles of other churches something which may be wanting in the work, he may add to it, according to the pure truth of the letter, without omitting anything, unless it produces confusion. . . . And in order that he should not be considered a liar, he begs all those who shall read this history to look in the Chronicles of Saint Denis ; there they will be able to find out by the letter if he has told the truth or a falsehood."[2]

[1] They include the Chronicle of Aimoin, *Gesta Dagoberti*, *Gesta Regum*, the chronicle of Siegbert, Eginhard, Saint Bertin, Guillaume de Jumièges, Hugues de Fleuri, the works of Suger, and many others.

[2] "Pour ce que plusieurs gens doutoient de la généalogie des roys de

An historical fragment by Nicholas de Senlis, commencing with the Trojan war, and coming rapidly down as far as the Merovingian period, the date whereof may be assigned to the first or second decade of the thirteenth century, shows that the cultivation of a prose style extended to a dialect which is neither Southern nor Northern. The writer winds up his labours with a remark which explains from one point of view the gradual abandonment of poetry as the medium of historic narrative. "Here ends the history. May God give life to the Count of Saint Pol, who caused it to be turned from Latin into Romance, without rhyme for better understanding, so that many a one may learn it." The reason is a natural one; and the like cause will account for the unrhyming of many of the old romances which took place during the same century.[1]

The work of Estienne Boilesve or Boileau, whose life covered the first seventy years of the thirteenth century, and who was *prévôt* of Paris under Louis IX., derives its chief value from the fact of its making us acquainted with the police regulations of the capital in his day, with the rules of the ancient trade corporations, and the nature and amount of the taxes levied upon the city for the benefit of the king. It is addressed "to all the citizens and all the residents in Paris, and to all those who may come within the boundaries of that same place," and it opens with a quaint remonstrance against

France, de quel original, de quel lignie ils sont descendus, emprist-il ceste œuvre à faire, par le commandement de tel homme qu'il ne put, ne dut refuser. . . . Et sera ceste histoire descrite selon la lettre et l'ordonnance des chroniques de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis, où les histoires et les fais de tous les roys sont escrits. . . . Car là doit-on puiser l'original de l'histoire. Et s'il peut trouver ès croniques d'autres églises chose qui vaille à la besoigne, il i pourra bien adjouster, selon la pure vérité de la lettre, sans riens oster se ce n'est chose qui face confusion. . . Et pour ce que on ne le tiegne à mencongier, il prie à tous ciaus que ceste histoire liront que ils regardent ans croniques de Saint-Denis ; là porra on esprover par la lettre s'il dist voir on menconge." I suspect that this extract has been partly modernised.

[1] Baudoin Butors applied himself industriously to paraphrasing in prose the heroic poems of his predecessors.

the indiscriminate trade of certain merchants, "because they had sold as foreign certain things belonging to their trade which were not so good nor so valuable as they ought to have been." A strange echo from other days, which proves that Paris had already begun, at least in one respect, to earn the character which was thereafter to distinguish her.

A contemporary of Boilesve's, who died in the same year, was a lawyer of no mean repute, Pierre de Fontaines; to whom Saint Louis, perplexed by any complicated questions of justice, was wont to apply for assistance, saying, "Judge this case." He has left behind him a treatise on the Roman law, as it had been accepted and interpreted in France. His language is rude and difficult, or must at least have appeared so, even at that time, to the Parisians. It is, in fact, the Picard dialect, but even more archaic.[1]

Another jurisconsult was Philippe de Remi, lord of Beaumanoir,[2] who left behind him a reputation as the French Justinian, so able and so profound, that, until the time of Montesquieu, France produced none who can be compared to him. He was a zealous champion of the royal prerogative, and at the same time a firm maintainer of the common law of France, and of the ancient liberties of the people, which had been somewhat overborne by the feudal supremacy of the aristocracy. It was in this spirit that he compiled his book *des Coutumes et Usages de Beauvoisis.* Clermont was his native county; but the customs and usages which he reasserted with all the convincing arguments of a skilful lawyer, and with much of the eloquence of a rhetorician, applied almost equally well to the whole of France. The method and manner of his work, as well as the style of his prose as it was written by cultivated Frenchmen at the end of

[1] "Tu qui te veus doutriner de droit, et de terre tenir, si te lô ke tu aies en toi quatre coses princhipaus: cremeur de Dieu, contenir soi, castiement de tes serjans, amour à deffendre tes sougis."

[2] He died in 1296.

the thirteenth century, are certainly very deserving.[1] Beaumanoir was also a poet, and several of his pieces, of no great literary merit, are extant.[2]

The list of the prose writers of the thirteenth century is by no means exhausted; and it might easily be extended to proportions too great for our present purpose. Lorens, a preaching friar, who wrote the *Somme des Vicés et des Vertus*,[3] better known under the short title of *Somme le Roi*, from the fact of its having been suggested by Philip III.; Agnès d'Harcourt, abbess of Longchamps, who wrote the life of Isabella, sister of Saint Louis; Marguerite de Duyn, prioress of Poletin, the authoress of a book of meditations; the anonymous author of a touching account of the last moments of Jeanne, Countess of Alençon,[4] are amongst the writers who in this century set their mark upon the earlier prose literature of France.

§ 2. Prose-Writers of the Fourteenth Century.

One other great figure arrests our notice in the group of noble and intellectual men whereof Saint Louis is the centre; the figure of a man who had fought by the good king's side, and sat at his feet, who served him faithfully in life and perhaps still better in death; for Jean, Sire de Joinville,[5] not only wrote the *Memoirs* of his royal master, but by that means assisted to secure his canonisation. The nature, style,

[1] "Il nous est avis que cheli qui veut estre loyaux baillis et droituriers doit avoir en soy dix vertus, en laquele l'une si est qui doit estre dame et maîtresse de toutes les autres, ne sans lui, ne pueent estre les autres vertus gouvernées, et ciele vertu si est appellée sapience; car autretant vaut estre sapiens comme sage."

[2] They are two long tales in verse, *La Manekine* (the Woman without Hands) and *Jehan et Blonde* (of Oxford), a Beauvaisian epic, interspersed with criticism on English manners and language; *Li saluz d'amours*, *La Complainte d'amours*, a tale of *Fole larguece*, and several other songs.

[3] Written in 1279. [4] She died in 1292. [5] 1223-1317.

and value of his work may be exemplified by its dedication and design.[1]

1. "To his good lord Louis (X.), son of the king of France, by the grace of God King of Navarre, Count Palatine of Champagne and Brie, Jehan, Sire de Joinville, his seneschal of Champagne, health, and love, and honour, and his service at command.

2. "Beloved Sire, I give you to know that madam the queen, your mother, who loved me much (to whom God grant his good mercy!) desired me as urgently as she could that I would cause to be made for her a book of the holy words and the good deeds of our king the holy Louis; and I promised it to her, and with the aid of God the book is finished in two parts. The first part relates how he governed all his time in accord with God and the Church, and to the advantage of his reign. The second part of the book speaks of his great knightly deeds and of his great feats of arms.

3. "Sire, because it is written, 'Do first that which pertains to God, and he will see to all thy other needs,' I have, in the first place, caused to be written that which pertains to the three things mentioned above; namely that which pertains to the profit of souls and of bodies, and that which pertains to the government of the people.

[1] We give the first three paragraphs in the original.

1. "A son bon Signour Looys, fil dou roy de France, par la grace de Dieu roy de Navarre, de Champaigne et de Brie conte palazin, Jehans, sires de Joinville, ses seneschaus de Champaigne, salut et amour et honnour, et son service appareillié.

2. "Chiers sire, je vous faiz à savoir que Mme. La Royne vostre mere, qui mout m'amoit (a cui Diex bone merci face!) me pria si à certes comme elle pot, que je li feisse faire un livre des saintes paroles et des bons faiz nostre roy saint Looys; et je le li oi en couvenant, et à l'aide de Dieu li livres est assouvis en dous parties. La premiere partie si devise comment il se gouverna tout son tens selonc Dieu et selonc l'Eglise, et au profit de son regne. La seconde partie dou livre si parle de ses granz chevaleries et de ses granz faiz d'armes.

3. "Sires, pour ce qu'il est escrit: 'fai premier ce qui afiert à Dieu, et il te adrescera toutes tes autres besoignes,' ai-je tout premier fait escrire ce qui afiert aus trois choses desus dites; c'est à savoir ce qui afiert au profit des ames et des cors, et ce qui afiert au gouvernement dou peuple."

4. "And those other things have I caused to be written also to the honour of the truly holy body; in order that by these things mentioned below one may see quite clearly that never a lay man of our time lived so holily all his time, from the beginning of his reign to the end of his life. I was not myself at the end of his life; but the Count Pierre d'Alençon, his son, was there (who loved me much), who related to me the fine end which he made, which you will find written in the end of this book.

5. "And it seems to me that they did by no means enough for him when they did not place him in the number of the martyrs, for the great torments which he suffered in the pilgrimage of the cross, during the space of six years that I was in his company, and for this likewise, that he followed our Lord in the matter of the cross. For if God died on the cross, so did he; for crusader was he when he died at Tunis.

6. "The second book will speak to you of his great knightly deeds and of his great acts of daring, which is such that I saw him four times place his body in risk of death, as you shall hear later on, to avert the loss of his people."

The translation is bare, and word for word, and hardly does justice to the simplicity and freshness of the original. The style of Joinville possesses in advance all the clearness and precision which were to become the chief characteristics of French prose—which were, indeed, legacies of the Latin prose upon which it was founded. If Joinville appears, by his writings, less sustained and dignified than his predecessor Villehardouin, less concise and supple in expression, he is at all events more reflective, more thoughtful, more redundant in idea and language, and more rich in vocabulary. The two have many virtues of manner and form in common; and if each is to be credited with particular and distinctive marks, they have yet deservedly come down to posterity bracketed together as the two first masters of the French historic style.

Joinville and Villehardouin had, in fact, much in com-

mon, not only in their writings but in the circumstances of their lives. Both were favoured servants and companions of Saint Louis; both followed him as pilgrims of the cross—the latter to Constantinople, the former in the second and abortive crusade which terminated by the king's death. Both had fought by his side, and both came home to write of his prowess and his goodness. The parallel extends still farther back, for both were born in Champagne, and held honourable office there. As regards their writings, the resemblance might have been still more marked if their subjects had been more nearly identical; but whilst Villehardouin's work is a narrative of events pure and simple, Joinville's consists of a personal memoir, and deals not only with events, but with words and opinions. Yet what we have said concerning the special French characteristics which found their scope in and impressed their seal upon the plastic language of the older historian, is no less true of the younger one. The historic genius of France embraces her talent for the composition of personal memoirs; the qualities which induce success in the one variety are the cause of success in the other. If anything, perhaps a French writer has greater reason to apply himself with confidence to the writing of a memoir than of a period of history. His subject is more strictly limited, he is better able to grasp his materials, and to throw himself into the conditions and circumstances which he undertakes to describe. The biographer can make himself one with the man he has set himself to study—can think his thoughts, experience his feelings, and even rehearse his acts. The historian can but partially and imperfectly follow a like course with an epoch of history, however narrow the group of circumstances comprised in it. He can indeed give us, actually or virtually, the biography of each of the figures who march across his stage; and if he be a genuine historian, this is precisely what he will do, bringing together and harmonising the men

whose actions created the history which he has to write. But when all is done, his work cannot have the concision, the tone, the completeness of a single memoir.[1]

In Joinville, of course, as in Villehardouin, we find such virtues as these in a rudimentary form; but they are there. A few touches suffice to bring the sainted king before us, with something of the actual vividness of reality, if not with the absolute distinctness which existed in the author's mind. Let us take a couple of paragraphs, almost at random, from the earlier part of the work.[2]

22. "He (St. Louis) was so sober of mouth that I never heard him, any day of my life, order any viands as do many rich men; and so he ate patiently that which his cooks prepared and placed before him. In his words he was moderate; for no day of my life did I hear him speak ill of any man, nor ever heard him name the devil, which name is far spread through the kingdom: the which I think by no means pleases God."

26. "He called me one time and said to me: 'I dare not

[1] Even the late M. Michelet seems no exception to this.

[2] 22. "De la bouche fu il si sobres que onques jour de ma vie je ne li oy devisier nulles viandes, aussi comme maint riche home font; ainçois manjoit pacientment ce que ses queus li appareilloit et mettoit on devant li. En ses paroles fu il attrempez; car onques jour de ma vie je ne li oy mal dire de nullui, ne onques ne li oy nommer le dyable, liquex nons est bien espandus par le royaume: ce que je croy qui ne plaît mie à Dieu."

26. "'Il m'apela une foiz et me dist: 'Je n'os parler à vous pour le soutil senz dont vous estes, de chose qui touche a Dieu; et pour ce ai-je apelie ces dous frères qui ci sont, que je vous vueil faire une demande.' La demande fu teix: 'Seneschaus, fist-il, quex chose est Diex?' Et je li diz: 'Sire, ce est si bone chose que mieudre ne puet estre.'—'Vraiement,' fist-il, 'c'est bien respondu; que ceste response que vous avez faite, est escripte en c'est livre que je tieing en ma main.'

27. "'Or vous demant je,' fist-il, 'lequel vous ameriés miex, ou que vous fussiés mesiaus, ou que vous eussiés fait un pechié mortel?' Et je onques ne li menti, li respondi que je en ameroie miex avoir fait trente que estre mesiaus. Et quant li frère s'en furent parti, il m'apela tout seul, et me fist seoir a ses piez et me dist: 'Comment me deistes-vous hier ce?' Et je li diz que encore le disoie-je? Et il me dist: 'Vous deistes comme hastis musarz; car vous devez savoir que nulle si laide mezclerie n'est comme d'estre en pechié au dyable: par quoy nulle si laide meselerie ne puet estre."

speak to you for the subtle sense which you have in that which touches on God; and for this have I called these two monks who are here, because I wish to put a question to you.' The question was this: 'Seneschal,' said he, 'what thing is God?' And I said to him: 'Sire, it is so good a thing that better cannot be.' 'Verily,' said he, 'it is well answered; for this reply which you have made is written in this book which I hold in my hand.'

27. "'Now I ask you,' said he, 'which would you like best, that you should be leprous, or that you had committed a mortal sin?' And I never lied to him; I answered 'that I should like better to have committed thirty (mortal sins) than to be leprous.' And when the monks were gone, he called me alone, and made me sit at his feet, and said: 'What did you say to me yesterday?' And I said to him that I should still say it. And he said to me: 'You spoke as a blundering fool; for you ought to know that there is no so repulsive leprosy as being in sin with the devil.'"

King, seneschal, and monks are before us as we read; for no poet which France had yet produced knew more cunningly how to wield the limner's brush than the earliest memoir-writer of France with his simple periods.

To Villehardouin and Joinville in the thirteenth century succeeded Froissart and Commines in the fourteenth—chroniclers worthy to tread in the steps of the fathers of French history, prose-writers who carried on the traditions of their masters to the verge of the Renaissance.[1] Jean Froissart, a native of Valenciennes in Hainault, became canon and treasurer of the collegiate church of Chimay in Normandy. He was a poet as well as a chronicler, but his poetic genius was lyrical, and for his history he found no medium so much under his command as the simple, nervous, and agreeable prose which entitles him to be regarded as a legitimate descendant of the *chroniqueurs de geste*. Such indeed he was, in spirit as well as

[1] Froissart, 1337—about 1410; Commines, 1445-1509.

in style. The subject which he selected, or which he found ready to his hand, was a record of chivalry as romantic as the Carlovingian epics constituted by the earlier Norman *chansons.* It may at once be admitted that Froissart was in a sense less patriotic than the majority of his predecessors or successors; and perhaps no historian can fall short in patriotism, as we understand the word, without gaining somewhat in fidelity. His first and kindest patron was Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III. of England. Froissart was a favourite of the English court; and had lived also in Scotland, Spain, and Gascony. He was, in short, a cosmopolitan; he spoke, thought, and wrote like one. His own countrymen have accused him of displaying his gratitude in his history; Marie Joseph Chénier went so far as to style him a "valet des princes." He hardly seems to merit so much contempt. Having described him as a prose trouvère and as a cosmopolitan, we have given the measure of his literary and historical value.

At the suggestion of Philippa's father, Robert of Namur, he wrote the chronicles on which his fame is built. The first edition bore for its title, *Chroniques de France, d'Angleterre, d'Ecosse, d'Espagne, de Bretagne, de Gascogne, de Flandre et pays d'alentour.* If this grandiloquent description is not sufficient to show the value which he placed on his work, read his own opinion frankly set forth—

"I well know, that in time to come, when I shall be dead, this grand and noble history will be much in vogue, and all noble and valiant men will take delight therein, and an example to act well. I also considered that, thanks to God, I have good sense and a retentive memory, and a thorough remembrance of all past occurrences, with a clear understanding to comprehend the facts I should gain information of, relative to my principal matters, and also having strength of body, and at a time of life to undergo difficulties; I therefore determined not to remain idle in the pursuit of the truth of distant occurrences, nor to employ any other but myself in this inquiry. In consequence,

I availed myself of an opportunity of visiting that high and redoubted prince Gaston Phoebus, Count de Foix and de Bearn."[1]

Yet who will say that his boast is not justified by the event? It may be that with a superior subject he is less of a true historian than Villehardouin or Joinville. "Little enough of a cleric," as he describes himself, "fond of seeing dances, hearing minstrels and words of pleasant conceit," with "pleasure for his law," candidly setting "battle and pleasure" above every other consideration, he misses the severity and dignity of the earlier prose chroniclers, but he surpasses them in vivacity, detailed interest, and, possibly, in the close faithfulness of his pictures of men and events. Moreover, as a painter of chivalrous deeds, and as the "own correspondent" of his times, as ubiquitous *ciceone* of a battle-field—witness his account of Poitiers—he does, in fact, fulfil his prophecy that posterity would find in his "history" both pleasure and example of noble acts. Montaigne says of him: "I love . . . the worthy Froissart, who has gone on his work with such a frank simplicity, that, having committed a fault, he is no way ashamed of avowing it, and correcting it at the place where he is informed of it—and who tells us the diversity of rumours which were current, and the different accounts that were told to him. It is history naked and unadorned: every one may profit by it, according to the depth of his understanding."

To Philippe de Commines, a native of Lille, we owe an

[1] "Je savais bien que un temps à venir et quand je serai mort, sera cette haute et noble histoire en grand cours, et y prendront tous, nobles et vaillants hommes, plaisance et exemple de bien faire; et entremente que j'avais, Dieu merci, sens, mémoire et bonne souvenance de toutes les choses passées, engin clair et aigu pour concevoir tous les faits dont je pourrais être informé, touchans à ma principale matière; âge, corps et membre pour souffrir peine; me avisai que je ne voulais me séjourner de non poursuivre ma matière, et pour savoir la vérité de lontaines besoignes, sans que j'envoyasse aucune autre personne au lieu de moi, pris voie et achaison raisonnable d'aller devers haut prince et redouté seigneur Gaston, comte de Foix et de Bern."—Froissart's *Chronique*, book iii. ch. xxiii.

appreciative, not to say an indiscriminate portrait, of Louis XI.; a king who has been more frequently blamed and satirised than praised, but who has been described, and probably with justice, as[1] "of ready, quick, and versatile spirit, shrewd and dissimulating in his enterprises, prompt in the commission of faults for which he atoned at his leisure, and by sheer weight of gold." Such, in fact, is the character which Commines gives of him,[2] though with many a gloss and apology. He has the art of a true narrator, and does not set up for being a philosopher. He tells us straight out what he wishes to tell—probably most of the evil as well as most of the good points of his hero; and wastes no words in trying to arrange them upon a preconceived plan. The sayings and doings of the king are thus recorded in the most natural manner, and gain our implicit credence. In *Quentin Durward*[3] Sir Walter Scott makes Louis XI. converse with Commines, and the latter answer the king in a manner which they naturally must have used with one another. No doubt the novelist had before his eyes the special relations existing between the monarch and his subject, which resulted in the writing of the biography; and he puts into the king's mouth words which he is very likely to have used to his satellite, without wishing that we should take them as literally true. For it is a question whether Commines was either specially conscientious or a remarkably good diplomatist; and he certainly does not make pretension to the former virtue in his writings. On the contrary, if he has to report any such equivocal sentiment of the king's as this: "He who has gain has glory," he never dreams of making it the text for a reflection of any kind, but gives it at least the partial approbation of silence.

Commines is chiefly known as the historian of Louis XI., but Charles VIII. employed him also in diplomatic negotia-

[1] Etienne Pasquier in his Letter to the Lord of Bissy.
[2] In his *Mémoires*.
[3] Chapter XXX.

tions, and he was present at the battle of Fornovo. Louis XII. did not use his talents, and thus he employed his leisure in writing his *Mémoires.* The following extract, describing the death of Charles VIII., is one of the rare passages in which our author shows some faint traces of emotion, and is a very fair sample of his ordinary style, simple and to the point, not without the adornments of a natural and unstudied eloquence : —

The king being in such great glory in relation to the world, and in such a good mind as to God, on the 7th of April 1498, being the eve of Palm Sunday, took his queen (Anne of Bretagne) by the hand, and led her out of her chamber to a place where she had never been before, to see them play at tennis in the castle ditch. They entered together into a gallery called the Haquelebac Gallery, upon the account of its having been formerly guarded by one Haquelebac. It was the nastiest place about the castle, broken down at the entrance. . . . The king was not a tall man, yet he knocked his head as he went in. He spent some time in looking upon the players, and talked freely with everybody. I was not there myself (for I had gone to my country-house about a week before), but his confessor, the Bishop of Angers, and the gentlemen of his bed-chamber, who were then about him, told me what I write. The last expression he used whilst he was in health was, that he hoped never to commit a mortal sin again, nor a venial sin if he could help it; and with those words in his mouth he fell down backwards and lost his speech. It was about two in the afternoon when he fell, and he lay motionless till eleven o'clock at night. Thrice he recovered his speech, but he quickly lost it again, as his confessor told me, who had confessed him twice that week—once of course, and a second time upon occasion of his touching for the King's evil. Every one went into the gallery that pleased, where the king was laid upon a coarse bed; and he never left it till he died, which was nine hours after. The confessor told me that every time he recovered his speech he called out upon God, the glorious Virgin Mary, St. Claude, and St. Blaise, to assist him. And thus died that great and powerful monarch in a sordid and

filthy place, though he had so many magnificent palaces of his own, and was building another more stately than any of them, yet he died in this poor chamber. How plain, then, and natural is it, from these two examples, for us to acknowledge the power and omnipotence of God, and that our life is but a span and a trifle, though we are so greedy and ambitious after the riches of this world; and that princes no more than peasants are able to resist the Almighty."[1]

We must not quit the century, nor the literary limit, without referring to another prose-writer, Christine de Pisan;[2] the first Frenchwoman who, at all events in prose, gave evidence of a finished literary perception. Brought up at the

[1] "Estant le Roy en cette grande gloire, quant au monde, et en bon vouloir, quant à Dieu, le septième jour d'avril, l'an mil quatre cens quatre-vingt-dix-huict, veille de Pasques flories, il partit de la chambre de la Reine Anne de Bretagne, sa femme, et la mena avec luy, pour voir jouër à la paume ceux qui joüoient aux fossez du chasteau où il ne l'avoit jamais menée que cette fois, et entrèrent ensemble en une galerie, qu'on appeloit la galerie d'Haquelebac, parceque cettuy Haquelebac l'avoit eüe autrefois en garde, et estoit le plus deshonnete lieu de ceans et étoit rompüe à l'entrée . . . et s'y heurta le Roy du front, contre l'huys, combien qu'il fut bien petit, et puis regarda long-temps les joüeurs, et devisoit à tout le monde. Je n'y estois point présent: mais son dit confesseur l'Evesque d'Angers, et ses prochains chambelans, le m'ont conté; car j'en estois party huit jours avant, et estois allé à ma maison. La dernière parole qu'il prononça jamais en devisant en santé, c'estoit qu'il dit qu'il avoit espérance de ne faire jamais péché mortel, ne véniel s'il pouvoit, et en disant cette parole il cheut à l'envers, et perdit la parole (il pouvait être deux heures après midy) et demeura là jusques à onze heures de nuict. Trois fois lui revint la parole; mais peu luy dura, comme me conta ledit confesseur, qui deux fois cette semaine l'avoit confessé. Toute personne entroit en la dite galerie, qui vouloit, et le trouvoit-on couché sur une pauvre paillasse, dont jamais il ne partit, jusques à ce qu'il eut rendu l'âme, et y fut neuf heures. Ledit confesseur, qui tousiours y fut, me dit que lorsque la parole luy revint à toutes les trois fois il disoit: 'Mon Dieu, et la glorieuse Vierge Marie, Monseigneur sainct Claude, Monseigneur sainct Blaise me soit en ayde!' et ainsi départit de ce monde si puissant et si grand Roy, et en si misérable lieu, qui tant avoit de belles maisons, et en faisoit une si belle, et si ne sceut à ce besoin finir d'une pauvre chambre. Combien donc se peut, par ces deux exemples cy-dessus couchez, cognoistre la puissance de Dieu estre grande, et que c'est peu de chose que de nostre misérable vie, qui tant nous donne de peine pour les choses du monde, et que les Roys n'y peuvent résister non plus que les laboureurs."—*Mémoires de Commines*, Bk. viii. ch. 25.

[2] 1363-1430.

court of Charles V. until she was seventeen years old, she was happy in the king's protection. Upon the death of her patron she published a panegyric, under the title of *Les Faits et bonnes Moeurs du sage Roi Charles V.* There can be no doubt that Christine de Pisan had studied the ancient classical, or post-classical models, and that she deserved the praise which Marot lavished on her "knowledge and teaching." The forerunner of Marguerite de Valois, Christine was born out her time. She too belonged to the Renaissance; and her star would have shone more brightly in a brighter atmosphere. She also wrote verses, and some of them show great naturalness of expression, as well as delicacy of feeling.

CHAPTER IV.

§ 1. The Church and the Drama.

By all that we have hitherto seen, the Church in the Middle Ages had not yet completed her task. She had used her influence originally for good, by strengthening and purifying social bonds, by inculcating obedience to constituted authorities, by imposing upon rough and turbulent natures a code of duty towards God and man. It is true that by abuse of the highest privileges she had brought some discredit upon religion; and that, through ambition and greed, she had first connived at the wars of discordant states, and then adopted warfare as the readiest means of self-aggrandisement. It is true, that both by her virtues and her crimes she was fulfilling the idea of her far-sighted founder, in destroying the corrupt civilisations and cultures of the past, upon the ruins whereof might be built something more valuable and lasting. The refinement, the learning, the literature, the drama of Greece and Rome disappeared from the world, or lingered almost exclusively amongst the more educated of Christian professors, who thought themselves entitled to feast in secret upon what was banned to the ignorant many; the reflected glory of the south, which had for a few centuries illumined the ingenuous minds of the Gallo-Romans, became extinct amongst their posterity, or, if it survived in any degree, was latent in expectation of a glorious revival. The natural gift of eloquence which had revealed itself in the Gallic orators and panegyrists in the time of the last Roman Emperors was but ill repre-

sented by the later French doctors and professors. The Church had laid her chilling fingers upon all mere worldly culture and learning, and even the brief glow of intelligence which distinguished the days of Charlemagne was checked and dimmed by the mists of ecclesiastical narrowness through which it would in vain have attempted to break. The poetic outbursts of the eleventh and succeeding centuries were in themselves acts of rebellion against the spirit of ecclesiasticism, a rebellion which made itself felt by satire and parody and even open defiance—a rebellion, in fact, which expressed itself in non-poetic minds by the formidable heresies of the south. For, after all, the Provençal poetry and the Albigensian heresy were but two distinct and dissimilar manifestations of one and the same effort of humanity to assert its independence. The Crusades to the Holy Land diverted and dissipated what might have proved to be an irresistible revolt; but the gallant self-assertion of French intellect and imagination had already succeeded in opening up the paths whereby a future age was to march forward to liberty.

For, in spite of herself, the Church steadily contributed to the downfall of her sway over the human mind. Her ecclesiastical dominion could be maintained only by stamping out, completely and unremittingly, every spark of superior intelligence, and forbidding, even in her own ministers, the cultivation of profane knowledge. If her policy had been directed throughout by a stern and individual will, such a supreme act of violation might, indeed, have been possible; and the annihilation of independent human thought would have resulted in the despotic subjection of the human race. But this policy, constant in its main principles and modes of operation, varied in details, and in the thoroughness of its application, with every new pope, and council, and ecclesiastical authority. The mental activity which was discouraged in the laymen should have been a crime in the priest and

monk; for knowledge is the mother of rebellion, and it was in the Church itself that the seeds of revolt first swelled and germinated. And thus, in the Church itself, at the moment when it had been brought safely through the greatest dangers, and had conquered its most formidable enemies, we find a worse foe than any that had hitherto menaced its authority, already struggling to cast off an unnatural and uncongenial allegiance.

The Church had adopted the Drama, as a handmaid peculiarly fitted to do her worthy and valuable service. For, in demanding that men should dispense with and despise the pleasures of the senses which the world had to offer them, and in cutting off the source of such compensation as they might have obtained through the intellect, it became necessary that she should herself minister to the natural demands of humanity, and provide in her own domain the attraction which she forbade them to seek outside. She expanded the worship of God into a spectacle, the sacred edifice into a theatre, the altar into a stage. The work was thoroughly and admirably done; the rude, simple, ignorant people learned to attend upon the offices of religion with eager anticipation, as affording to them the brightest and lightest moments of their lives. They came away, not mystified or wearied by what they had heard and seen, but charmed and refreshed. Without, they had cares and troubles, anxieties and pains; within, they had pleasant and appetising food for eye and ear, for imagination and reflection. The Church was in fact the club of the Middle Ages, always open, always peaceful and cheerful, nearly always entertaining. The whole social life of the age appears to have taken refuge within the Church.[1]

Nor was the mere performance of divine worship, pompous and gorgeous as it gradually became, the limit of the spectacles presented to the congregation. Veritable dramas were

[1] Michelet.

enacted in many of the cathedrals, which rivalled in attractiveness all that tradition could recall of the infamous exhibitions of Rome.[1] A double reason suggested and warranted the first introduction of these *quasi*-sacred dramas into the Church. Not only was it necessary to hold out a constant allurement to the people, but the time came when the majority of the congregation no longer understood the language of prayer and hymn, and when the heart must be reached, if at all, directly through the bodily senses. The first Christian drama was a gesture; it was by a succession of gestures that the priests and their assistants were constrained to illustrate and interpret their dead-letter of devotion. On Ascension day a priest was wont to stand in his surplice upon the outer gallery of Nôtre-Dame, and with outstretched arms represent the assumption of Christ into heaven. On the feast of Pentecost a dove figured the presence of the Holy Ghost, whilst tongues of fire descended from the roof of the church. At Easter, three men, dressed in white robes, with hoods upon their heads, a silver flask of consecrated oil in their hands, interpreted the story of the three Marys proceeding to the sepulchre, whilst a fourth, in the form of an angel, announced to them the resurrection of their Lord. At Christmas, the infant Jesus was shown in his manger, the Magi and the shepherds gathered round, the youngest choristers playing the parts of angels from the galleries. From spectacles such as these not even the lower animals were excluded; the oxen present at the birth of Christ, the ass which carried him into Egypt, the cock which crowed the conviction of Peter,—all were admitted.

Little by little, embellishments of the sacred narrative, and, later still, inventions found an entry into these ecclesiastical dramas. The *Mystère d'Adam*, the work of a priest in the twelfth century, was acted at the church doors by priests who doffed their vestments in order to put on—with more

[1] See Ernest Rénan, *l'Antéchrist*, p. 169.

of decency than dramatic fidelity—the costumes appropriate to their richly decorated stage. We can picture the attractive show which was thus freely offered to the crowd of attentive spectators—quaint figures of a rude and restless epoch, who stood gaping round the church porch. The "properties" of the stage were the furniture and the vestments of the sacred building itself, which served the actors for a green-room. The platform was decked with flowers and shrubs, to represent the precincts of the Garden of Eden; whilst a higher stage, raised round the sides of the porch, denoted the central Paradise. The scene opens, showing the Saviour in an embroidered dalmatic; Adam standing before him dressed in a red tunic, attentive to his commands; Eve, with bowed head, dressed in a long white robe, with a veil of spotless silk. Less elaborate than the costumes was the machinery of this strange drama, though even this, in its rude ingenuity, rivalled the realistic efforts of our own stage carpenters. Satan, appearing in his serpent's garb[1] crawled about the stage, and even up the trunk of the forbidden tree. The acting was no less rude, and no less effective. After our first parents had been driven out of Paradise, and had tilled a little soil with much labour and pain, Satan takes advantage of their absence to sow thistles and briers. The couple returning, and perceiving the work of their enemy, express their despair by rolling upon the ground.

What of the language in which this Biblical melodrama is unfolded? It is but natural that we should find less awkwardness in the production of the poetic than of the histrionic art. And, in fact, Adam, and in a special degree Satan, are but the troubadours of the fall. The latter approaches Eve with much the same sort of flattery as that wherewith a Provençal in the twelfth century approached his mistress "Thou art a feeble and tender thing, and art more fresh than is the rose; thou art more white than crystal, than

[1] "Artificiose compositus," as the directions of the play informs us.

snow which falls on ice in the valley. A sorry couple has the Creator made of you; thou art too tender, and Adam too harsh. But nevertheless thou art the more wise; thou hast set thy heart on great common-sense." The language of God to Adam is the language of the *ensenhamen*, full of sage advice; and Adam replies like a pattern Sir Charles Grandison. "Great gratitude I render to thy goodness, who created me, and dost me such kindness that thou hast set both good and ill within me. I will make it my desire to serve thee. Thou art my Lord, I am thy creature; thou mouldest me, and I am of thy making. My will shall never be so harsh but that my whole care shall be to serve thee." There is, no doubt, a dignity and wholesome severity in the decasyllables of God; and we may probably discern in Satan's verse, shorn as it is of a metre, the desire to parody, as well as to imitate, the romantic love-language of the day.

§ 2. The Miracle Plays.

Such was the religious drama as it gained form and completeness; and it was not long before its authors went for their subjects beyond the limits of Scripture. The Bible-plays soon gave place to, or rather were recruited by, miracle-plays; and the thirteenth century furnishes at least two of these which are still extant—the *Miracle de Théophile*, by Rutebeuf, and the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*, by Jean Bodel. The former appears to have been founded on a Latin narrative, recording the apostasy and recantation of Theophilus, *vidame* of the church of Adana.[1] Theophilus has been dismissed from his office; he rails at his misfortune, and ends by railing at God. The devil promises to redeem his fortunes at the price of his soul; and, the compact being made, bids him be of good cheer. This is the recommendation Satan gives to him:—

[1] A.D. 538.

" Theophilus, most gentle friend,
Since thou hast placed thyself in my hands,
I will tell thee what thou must do.
Thou must never love a poor man:
If a poor man surprises thee and prays to thee,
Turn away thy ears, go thy way;
If any one humbles himself before thee,
Answer (with) pride and deceit;
If a poor man asks at thy door,
Take care that he does not carry away alms.
Gentleness, humility, mercy
And charity and friendship,
To fast and to do penance,
Put great affliction in my stomach.
To give alms and to pray to God
This would annoy me much;
To love God and to live chastely
Then seem to me a serpent and a viper
Eats my heart and stomach.
When one enters the hospital
To look at a sick person,
Then feel I my heart so dead and unpleasant,
That I think that it does not beat;
He who acts well thus torments me;
Go away, thou seneschal,
Abandon good (works) and do evil." [1]

[1] "Théophiles, biaus douz amis,
Puisque tu t'es en mes mains mis,
Je te dirai que tu feras,
Jamès povre homme n'ameras:
Se povres hom sorpris te proie,
Torne l'oreille, va ta voie;
S'aucuns envers toi s'umelie
Respon orgueil et félonie;
Se pauvres demande à ta porte,
Si gardes qu'aumosne n'enporte.
Douçor, humilitez, pitiez,
Et charitez et amistiez,
Jeûne fère, pénitance
Me metent grant duel en la pance;
Aumosne fère et Deu proier,
Ce me repuet trop anoier;
Dieu amer et chastement vivre,
Lors me samble serpent et guivre
Me menjue le cuer et le ventre.
Quant l'en en la meson Dieu entre
Por regarder aucun malade,
Lors ai le cuer si mort et fade
Qu'il m'est avis que point n'en sent;
Cil qui fet bien si me tormente.
Va-t-en! tu seras sénechaus:
Lai les biens et si fai les maus."

A hospital was formerly called a *maison Dieu*, and there is even now one in Paris, named *l'hôtel Dieu*.

However, Theophilus does not reap his reward from Satan; he is restored by the bishop to his former office. Then he repents, and invokes Mary in the following words :—

" My Lady, I dare not,
Flower of the eglantine and the lily and the rose;
In whom the Son of God rests,
What shall I do?
I feel myself wickedly bound
To the evil-doing madman
I do not know what to do;
I shall never leave off praying.
Virgin, maiden debonnair,
Honoured Lady,
My soul shall be indeed destroyed,
When it shall dwell in hell
With Cain." [1]

He obtains from her the annulment of the infernal compact, apparently without the resignation of his benefice; for all the world like the real-life repentance of the nineteenth century.

The play of *Saint Nicolas* is by several degrees more profane in its treatment than Rutebeuf's drama, and, as it is by no means certain that it was ever acted in the church porch, we may now be in the presence of the first liberation of the Middle Age drama from ecclesiastical tutelage. Jean Bodel was a trouvère living at Arras,[2] whose latter life was the acme of human misery, for he died a leper. His work is even less original than the *Miracle de Théophile.* It is based upon a *ludus* of the monk Hilarius, also about Saint Nicolas. A rich

[1] " Dame je n'ose
Flors d'aiglentier et lis et rose;
En qui li filz Diex se repose,
Que ferai-gié?
Malement me sent engagié,
Envers le maufé enragié.
Ne sai que fère:
Jamais ne finerai de brère.
Virge pucelle débonère,
Dame Honorée,
Bien sera m'ame dévorée,
Qu'en enfer sera demorée
Avec Cahn."

[2] 1165-1223.

pagan kept a statue of the saint to stand guard over his treasures, but some robbers passing by his house, and finding the doors open, carry off the gold, leaving the saint behind them. The pagan returns, and, discovering his loss, flies into a rage with his statue, and beats it without mercy. The statue, moved from its impassibility by such treatment, lets itself out by night, overtakes the robbers, and restores the treasure, whereupon the pagan is added to the number of the believers. Such was the original legend, but Bodel varied it by converting the pagan into a Mussulman king, who, about to go to war with the Christians, consults his statue of Tervagant. He appeals to it in these words: "If I shall gain, then laugh; and if I lose, then weep." Tervagant, to be on the safe side, did both, which the king's seneschal interpreted to mean that his master should conquer in fight and should then submit to Christianity. The first part of this forecast having proved correct, the king is resting from his labours when a prisoner is brought before him who takes occasion to extol the power of Saint Nicolas. The king desires to test the saint's power, and causes proclamation to be made as follows: "*Oiés, oiés,* masters all; come before me, give heed. On the part of the king; who gives you to know that he will never have key nor bolt to his treasure nor to his property. Just as on the open ground, it may be discovered, so it seems to me; and he who can steal it, let him steal it." It is stolen, and it is restored, the original fable being here tacked on to the new introduction in a manner which need not be further explained.

The speciality of Bodel's drama is a peculiarly secular one, and it is hardly probable that the ecclesiastical actors, however anxious they may have been to keep the entertainment of their congregations in their own hands, would have had the courage to underline the play of *Saint Nicolas* for representation in the church porch. The moral of the plot is clearly favourable to Christianity, but the best and most lively scenes

are those which deal with tavern life, its brawls and amusements, its dice and drink, its company and its jests. Nothing could be more welcome to the masses than a farce dealing, as this did, with the familiar scenes of their everyday life, and no better medium could have been found for the enforcement of morality by home-thrusts of good-natured satire, but it was just a little too broad and reckless for the theatre of the priests. It was, indeed, an age in which an English dignitary of the Church could write that he had made up his mind to die in a tavern,[1] but even he would not have made his joke before the congregation and from the church porch. The play of *Saint Nicolas* abounds in tavern scenes. When the king sends out his courier Auberon to summon his feudatories for the war, the latter halts on his road at a place of entertainment, and, the time coming for him to settle his account, calls for the dice, plays until he has enough in hand, settles with the host, and goes away in high good humour. In another tavern we come upon the advertising medium of the period, a public crier of wine, who vaunts his employer's wares in this fashion :—

"Wine newly tapped,
By the full quart and the full cask,
Healthy, worth drinking, full-bodied,
Frisking like a squirrel in the wood,
With no taste of impurity or sourness,
(Wine) which runs upon the lees, dry and sharp,
Clear as a sinner's tears ;
Clinging to the tongues of good judges . . .
See how it gets rid of its froth,
And leaps, and sparkles, and bubbles."[2]

[1] "Meum est propositum in tabernâ mori."—*Walter Map.*

[2] "Le vin aforé de nouvel,
A plein lot et à plein tonnel
Sage bevant et plein et gros,
Rampant comme escuireus en bos,
Sans nul mors de pourri ne d'aigre
Seur lie court et sec et maigre,
Clair com larme de pécheour ;
Croupant sur langue à lécheour . . .
Voi com il mangue s' escume,
Et saut et estinchele et frit."

It was the frequenters of the tavern who stole the king's treasures, and the host who concealed them. Excellent moral, only a little weakened in face of the fact that it was by entering the hospitable doors that the seneschal discovered the theft, and by tipsy gossip that the robbers betrayed themselves.

Probably the first stage which rivalled that of the ecclesiastics was erected in the house of some wealthy citizen who had acquired a taste for the drama in the cathedral close, and who desired an opportunity of looking on at a comedy with a little more breadth of subject and language. At all events we hear about this time of meetings attended by the citizens of various towns in France, at which dramatic representations took place.[1] Before such an audience in Arras, no doubt, Bodel's play was originally acted, and presently afterwards Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de la Feuillie*.[2] Adam is his own hero; his domestic troubles are the theme of his comedy. He comes in dressed in priestly garb, and says to his audience: "My lords, should you like to know why I have changed my coat? I have been living with a wife; now I return to the clergy." He satirises his fellow-townsmen, carping at their love of gambling, at their gluttony and license, at the frailty of their women, even at the decrees of the Pope —being by no means the first or the last public censor created by private wrongs. The second act introduces us to the household (*mesnie*) of King Hallequin (anglicè "Harlequin"), a company of fairies comprising Morgue, Maglore, Arsile, and others, who have been invited to a feast by Adam and his fellow-citizen Riquesse. Unfortunately they have forgotten to place a knife for Maglore, so that when, after the feast, the other fairies have given their customary presents to the hosts, she uses her power by taking them all away again; whereupon the author and actor breaks out into a string of jesting

[1] These assemblies came to be called *puys*—a name, it is suggested, due to the fact that they were originated in Puy-en-Velay. [2] A.D. 1261.

applications of this pretty moral to each and all of his hearers. The scene changes, and we find ourselves in a tavern, a monk being in the company. He drinks himself to sleep, and the rest at once conceive the plan of making him pay for the score of all those who are there. When he awakes he naturally objects, but in vain, so that in the end he is obliged to leave his relics in pawn.

A pastoral drama by the same author, and produced in the same place, *Robin et Marion*, was very popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It grew out of an old song with the burden "Robin loves me, I am Robin's," which Marion is singing when the scene opens. The gay cavalier, destined to become so attractive and finished a character in the hands of Molière,[1] approaches and does his best to gain her favour, but she scornfully rejects him. He gives place to Robin, whom Marion informs of her adventure. Robin seeks the advice and assistance of his brother shepherds, who armed with sticks place themselves on the road near the meadows where Marion is still wiling away her time. The knight returns and renews his suit with no more luck than before, and Robin appears on the scene. Of him the youthful noble takes no account, save to strike him contemptuously with his glove, which suffices to cool the courage of the country clown. But Marion is her own best protectress, and the knight is compelled to relinquish his attempt. No sooner is he gone than the shepherds assemble in great force, and after a little jesting at Robin's cowardice we have the since familiar spectacle of a "ballet de bergers."

It is evident enough that Adam de la Halle would not allow much virtue or manliness in any of his fellow-creatures, but he undoubtedly had the French gift of satire very fully developed, and must be held responsible for a great deal of the stereotyped form of dramatic raillery which we have since

[1] See Lélie, Eraste, Valère, Horace, Clitandre, and, above all, Don Juan.

come to regard as a national inheritance in France. The young would-be gallant is not the only character familiar to us which owes its original creation, or at least its naturalisation, to Adam de la Halle, who deserves great credit as the father of French comedy. His conceptions are eminently clever, his satire is bitter but trenchant and witty, and he was amongst the first to teach his countrymen the terrible power of that two-edged sword which is perhaps their most formidable weapon. And yet the seed which he sowed was long in bearing fruit. He was not without imitators in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the mysteries were destined for some time longer to occupy the place of honour on the stage. The church porch had made these semi-religious comedies fashionable and respectable, and in the fourteenth century there were few French cities in which they were not publicly represented in the squares or just without the walls. Philip the Fair was a generous patron of the drama, and welcomed the actors at his court, whilst the municipal authorities vied with each other in supporting them. Nor were these dramas always in the nature of comedies or burlesques of Scripture narrative. The Passion-Play was regularly acted almost year by year. At Valenciennes we hear of its being protracted over five-and-twenty days. At Angers it occupied nearly a week, after being introduced by the *Veni Creator*. True, the histrionic art did not absorb the whole of the time, for one of the most significant circumstances of this literary and social phenomenon was the combination of the drama pure and simple with dramatic predication.

§ 3. The Stage, the Comedies, and the Actors.

The stage on which religious plays were acted—especially such as introduced the Deity amongst the *dramatis personæ*,

and heaven amongst the scenic effects—was one at which we must not fail to glance. It was, in fact, a development of the church porch already referred to. Imagine our modern theatres; people the stage with spectators, the dress circle and upper boxes with actors; this gives a fair approximate notion of the buildings or temporary erections in which the mysteries were wont to be represented. The stage was, in fact, a manifold one, and may not inaptly be compared to a girl's doll's house: the uppermost story accommodating heaven, with the Father sitting in state, supported by personified virtues, such as Justice, Pity, Hope, and the chorus of angels and archangels. In this heaven also was the orchestra; or at least the organ and the choir, which the orchestra was afterwards to replace. Beneath was the earth; and at the bottom of all, Satan and his imps played the pranks which became their evil reputation, and writhed in impotent envy at every sign of a miracle above. Of course there was a ladder to connect this tripartite arrangement of the world, more easy of descent than of ascent.

Amongst the favourite mysteries and other religious dramas of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were many in which profane history had not unfrequently its share of the dramatist's attention.[1] The mysteries, in fact, began to go tolerably far afield for their subjects; to the Crusades, for instance, and to more recent French history. Thus, between the years 1429 and 1470 we read of the representation of the *Mystère du Siége d'Orléans*, in which, of course, Jeanne d'Arc occupies the place of the saint whose miraculous career is commemorated. With this wider latitude of subject came, naturally, a wider variety amongst the actors. The histrionic art was no longer confined to ecclesiastics and to citizens endowed with a certain amount of leisure, cultivation, and

[1] *Robert le Diable, la Nonne enlevée, le Baptême de Clovis, la Marquise de Gaudine, le Voyage de Saint Louis en Terre Sainte.*

wealth. The artizans of the large towns took to following the stage as a means of increasing their incomes, even if they may not be said, at the close of the fourteenth century, to have adopted it as an exclusive profession. At all events the year 1398 was marked by the establishment of a company, by royal patent, devoted to the production of *mystères;* and the corporation or *Confrérie de la Passion*, as it was called, soon laid by money, bought land, and built a theatre. They kept very steadily to their original part, never seeking to strike out a new line for themselves, although naturally inclined, or led by the taste of their audience, to the most lax and profane of the plays at their disposal.

But the Church began at last to take alarm at the popularity of these more questionable dramas. Villon had his part in aggravating the fear, as we shall presently see; and the civil government agreed with the ecclesiastics. A sentence of the *procureur*-général of Paris, of the date of 1542, speaks of "these unlettered people, of no understanding in such matters, of the lowest condition, such as a carpenter, an upholsterer, a fishmonger, who have played the *Acts of the Apostles*, adding thereto various apocryphal things. Both the managers and the players are ignorant men, not knowing A from B, who were never instructed nor trained for the stage." Six years later, Parliament renewed the privilege of the corporation of the brethren of the Passion, but gave them authority only for "lawful, profane, and proper subjects," and expressly excluding the representation of sacred mysteries. It was a blow from which the confrérie never recovered.

Theatrical companies of quite a different complexion were those of the *Enfants Sans-Souci* and the *Clercs de la Basoche*, who, with the simplest possible stage and accessories, contented themselves with playing farces and *sotie*s, although they were not long in rising to the level of poetic dramas. Their rivalry with the *Confrères de la Passion* was not dissimilar, if

we make all due allowance, from the rivalry between the company of Molière, more than a century later, and the cultivators of the severer style at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Like the latter, the old *confrérie* at the *Hôpital de la Trinité* began to find the public slipping away from them, and sought to bring them back by condescending to buffoonery and burlesque. But they ended by coalescing with the *Enfants Sans-Souci.* Amongst their most distinguished members was Clément Marot, whose favour with the king rescued his company from imminent suppression in 1512. We give the general invitation which "the Prince of Fools," the elective chief of the *Enfants,* was wont to address to the public in announcing a forthcoming representation:

"Lunatic fools, fools giddy, fools wise,
Town fools, fools in the castles, village fools,
Fools doating, fools artless, fools subtle,
Fools amorous, fools private, savage fools,
Fools old and new, and fools of every age,
Fools barbarous, strange, and genteel,
Fools reasonable, fools perverse, fools stubborn,
Your prince, without any intervals,
Shall act his plays on Shrove Tuesday at the halls."[1]

One of the favourite pieces in the répertoire of these companies was the *Farce du Cuvier,* which displays a very quaint and characteristic French humour. Jaquinot is a henpecked husband, whose round of household duties is never completed, and rarely even attempted to the satisfaction of the exacting

[1] "Sots lunatiques, sots étourdis, sots sages,
Sots de villes, sots de châteaux, sots de villages,
Sots rassottez, sots nyais, sots subtils,
Sots amoureux, sots privez, sots sauvages,
Sots vieux, nouveaux, et sots de tous âges,
Sots barbares, étranges, et gentils,
Sots raisonables, sots pervers, sots rétifs,
Votre prince, sans nulles intervalles,
Le mardi gras jouera ses jeux aux halles."

wife. The written list of his duties requires him to bake, to attend to the oven, to wash, to sift, to cook, to go, to come, to bustle, to run, to bake the bread, to heat the oven, to bring the corn to the mill, to make the bed early in the morning, to put the pot on the fire, to keep the kitchen clean, to wash up the pots, the plates, and the dishes. One day whilst he was helping his wife to wash the linen, she unfortunately tumbles into the copper. There is no one but Jaquinot to assist her; but she begs and entreats him in vain. Her training has been only too successful, for, earnestly as he consults his list, he can find no mention of this particular duty. The scene is lively enough to deserve quoting, and will remind the reader of many a later, and no more spirited, parallel.

Wife (*in the copper*). Good husband, save my life. I am already quite fainting, give me your hand a while.

Jaquinot. It is not in my list. . .

Wife. Alas! who will hear me? Death will come and take me away.

Jaquinot (*reading his list*). "To bake, to attend to the oven, to wash, to sift, and to cook."

Wife. My blood is already quite changed; I am at the point of death.

Jaquinot (*continuing to read*). "To rub, to mend, to keep bright the kitchen utensils."

Wife. Come quickly to my assistance.

Jaquinot. "To come, to go, to bustle, to run."

Wife. Never shall I pass this day.

Jaquinot. "To bake the bread, to heat the oven."

Wife. Ah, your hand; I am approaching my last moment.

Jaquinot. "To bring the corn to the mill."

Wife. You are worse than a mastiff.

Jaquinot. "To make the bed early in the morning."

Wife. Oh! you think this is a joke.

Jaquinot. "And then to put the pot on the fire."

Wife. Oh! where is my mother Jaquette?

Jaquinot. "And to keep the kitchen clean."

Wife. Go and fetch the priest.

Jaquinot. My paper is wholly ended; but I tell you, without more ado, that it is not on my list.

In the end the poor man extracts a promise from his wife to give him his due share of authority, and so releases her, saying, "From henceforth, then, I shall be master, for my wife allows it."

The theatre had manifestly made a great stride in France since it had its origin in the desire of the Church to increase the attractiveness of her services; and it had also played a notable part in cultivating the tastes of the people. The influence was, of course, mutual; for if the French character was to be confirmed and sharpened by the stage, it was from the national characteristics themselves that its peculiarities were in the first instance impressed upon it. True, there was not much in the drama preceding the Renaissance which can be said to exhibit the specialities of the nation and the literature; but there was at all events enough to show the nature of what was to follow. There had not been much time for the growth of that luxuriant genius which was to produce and inspire a Corneille, a Racine, and a Molière, and which was eventually to make France the home of the didactic drama and the satirical comedy; but the brief examples above given show the richness of the soil from which the harvest was to be gathered. One play remains to be noticed, worthy the name of a comedy, which was produced about the close of the fifteenth century; the *Farce de Pathelin,* attributed variously to Villon, Antoine de la Salle, and Pierre Blanchet, and most probably the work of the latter. Pathelin is the descendant of Renard, the ancestor of Mascarille and Scapin, a "first-rate teacher of cheating," who, being reproached by his wife with their poverty, engages to provide her with handsome garments, and pitches upon a certain Guillaume Joceaume, draper, as the victim of his skill in deception. He goes and selects some cloths, prais-

ing their beauty, and flattering the honest tradesman to the top of his bent. A long time is occupied in beating down the price, which is finally settled at nine francs; but unfortunately the draper will not give credit to the needy starveling advocate. Pathelin resorts to another device; he invites the draper to come to his house in the evening and share a fat goose, which is even now before the fire. The trick succeeds. The tradesman's heart is melted, and he gives up the cloth. Pathelin carries it home; and when the draper arrives in the evening he is met by the advocate's wife, who is barely able for grief to inform him that her husband has been for eleven weeks ill in bed, and is now at the point of death. The scene changes. The draper has a farm; and he discovers that his shepherd has been killing his sheep for his own consumption. He summons him before the judge, and chance leads the shepherd to Pathelin's door. He could not have had a better advocate. Arrived in court, the draper is commencing his tale of wrong when he suddenly recognises Pathelin. He is confounded; he begins to wander in his mind and in his words, mixing up his sheep with the trickeries of the advocate for the accused:

"See, my lord; but the business affects me;
However, upon my faith, my mouth
To-day will not say a single word of it. . . .
I must swallow it,
Without chewing . . . Now, I was saying
How I had
Delivered to him six yards . . . need I say
Sheep . . . I pray you, sir,
To pardon me.
This fine fellow
My shepherd, when he ought to be
In the fields . . . he said that I should have
Six golden crowns when I came . . .
I say, that for three years past
My shepherd agreed

That he would faithfully guard
My sheep, and would practise
No wrong or villany . . . And now he denies
Both cloth and money plainly!
Ah, master Peter, truly
This rogue here stole the wool
Of my sheep, and, when they were quite healthy,
He made them die and perish,
By knocking them down, and striking them
With a big stick on the head:
When my cloth was under his arm,
He went away very quickly,
And told me to come
For the six crowns to his house."[1]

It is in vain that the judge keeps on recalling him to the point: "Come, let us return to these sheep." Pathelin takes advantage of his confusion, makes his client play the idiot; until at last, wearied out by a case of which he can make neither head nor tail, the judge dismisses the suit saying to the unfortunate draper: "I forbid you to proceed. It is very fine to listen to the complaints of a fool." And to the shepherd: "Return to your beasts." But Pathelin is himself outdone by the shepherd, from whom he would fain

[1] "Monseigneur; mais le cas me touche;
Toutesfois, par ma foy, ma bouche
Meshuy un seul mot n'en dira . . .
Il le me convient avaller
Sans mascher . . . Or çà, je disoye,
A mon propos, comment j'avoye
Baillé six aulnes . . . Doy-je dire
Mes brebis . . . je vous en pry, sire,
Pardonnez-moy? Ce gentil maistre
Mon bergier quant il devoit estre
Aux champs . . . il me dit que j'auroye
Six escuz d'or, quant je viendroye...
Dy-je, depuis trois ans en ça,
Mon berger me convenança
Que loyaument me garderoit
Mes brebis, et ne my feroit
Ne dommaige ne villenie. . .
Et puis, maintenant il me nie
Et drap et argent plainement!
Ah! maistre Pierre, vrayement,
Ce ribaut-cy m'embloit les laines
De mes bestes; et, toutes saines,
Les faisoit mourir et périr,
Par les assommer et ferir
De gros baston sur la cervelle . .
Quant mon drap fut soubz son aisselle,
Il se mist en chemin grant erre,
Et me dist que j'allasse querre
Six escuz d'or en sa maison."

have extracted a fee. His too apt pupil only continues his idiocy, and thus comes off the best of all the three.

Here, clearly, is humour of the most genuine kind; and with this bright anticipation of the Renaissance, the drama may rest for a while.

§ 4. The Three Last Trouvères.

Before emerging from the Middle Ages we are arrested by three poets, different in style and in character, the last of the race of trouvères, who will not be so easily dismissed as the rest of the romantic and lyric minstrels who shed their late glory over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Frenchmen have reason to be proud of this trio, whereof one was a noble prince, another a king, and the third, eminently French, eminently endowed with the simple virtues, the brilliant frailties, the easy recklessness, of the land of his birth.

Charles of Orléans[1] was the son of the murdered Louis, Duke of Orleans, and of Valentine of Milan. He was taken prisoner by the English at the battle of Agincourt, and remained a captive in England for a period of twenty-five years. Yet he himself had invited, in 1410, the English to come into France, in order to assist him to avenge the death of his father. During his long sojourn in a foreign land he wrote many poems, in different languages, and sang chiefly about the beauties of nature and of love with infinite and artless grace, though he is marred not seldom by excess of allegory. His songs reflect the mind of a poet, but not the history of his times; and even after his return, and until his death, he dallied with poetry at his court at Blois, after a vain attempt to oppose Charles VII. He was killed at last by sorrow at an angry rebuke of Louis XI. In less perilous times he might have become a great poet, but as a prince he neglected his duties. This is what he wrote when in prison:—

[1] 1391-1465.

"A report has been spread in France,
In many places, that I was dead;
Of which were not very sorry
Some who hate me wrongly;
Others have been greatly pained,
Who love me loyally,
Like good and true friends;
Therefore I let every one know
That the mouse is still alive.

I have had neither illness nor sorrow,
But, thank God, am healthy and strong
And pass (my) time in hope
That peace, which sleeps too long,
Shall awaken, and by treaty
Will bring joy to all;
For this, may be cursed by God
Those who are sorry to see
That still the mouse is alive.

Youth has power over me
But old age does its best
To have me under its influence;
Now it will fail in its endeavours,
I am far enough from its port.
I wish to keep my heir from weeping.
Praised be God in Paradise,
Who has given me strength and power,
That the mouse is still alive.

No one wears black for me,
Grey cloth is sold much cheaper;
Now each one may know, in short,
That the mouse is still alive."[1]

[1] "Nouvelles ont couru en France,
Par mains lieux, que j'estoye mort;
Dont avoïënt peu de desplaisance;
Aucuns ceux qui me hayent à tort;
Autres en ont eu desconfort,
Qui m'ayment de loyal vouloir,
Comme mes bons et vrais amis;
Si fais à toutes gens sçavoir
Qu'encore est vive la souris.

When Charles of Orléans had returned to France he wrote to one of his friends, who would not come to see him:

"Let the bellman cry aloud,
On the highway, everywhere;
Fredet, he is no more seen;
Is he put in prison?"[1]

The following *rondeau*,[2] which has been universally quoted and greatly admired, will justify what we have said about his appreciation of the beauties of nature:

"The weather has doffed its cloak
Of wind, and cold, and rain,
It has donned embroideries
Of sparkling, clear, and handsome sun.
There is not an animal or bird
But in its own tongue sings or shouts.
The weather has doffed its cloak
Of wind, and cold, and rain.
River, fountain, and small stream

Je n'ai éu mal, ne grevance,
Dieu mercy, mais sui sain et fort,
Et passe temps en espérance
Que Paix, qui trop longuement dort,
S'esveillera et par accort
A tous fera liesse avoir
Pour ce, de Dieu soient maudis
Ceulx qui sont dolens de veoir
Qu'encore est vive la souris

Jeunesse sur moy a puissance;
Mais vieillesse fait son esfort
De m'avoir en sa gouvernance,
A present faillira son sort:
Je suis assez loin de son port.
De plourer veuil garder mon hoir
Loué soit Dieu de Paradis
Qui m'a donné force et povoir,
Qu'encore est vive la souris.

Nul ne porte pour moy le noir,
On vent meilleur marchié drap gris;
Or, tiengne chascun, pour tout voir,
Qu'encore est vive la souris."

[1] "Crié soit à la clochette
Par les ruës, sus et jus,
Fredet, on ne le voit plus;
Est-il mis en oubliete?"

[2] "Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye,
Il s'est vestu de broderie,
De soleil luisant, cler et beau.
Il n'y a beste ne oiseau
Qu'en son jargon ne chante ou crye;
Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye,
Riviere, fontaine et ruisseau
Portent en livrée jolye
Gouttes d'argent, d'orfaverie;
Chacun s'abille de nouveau;
Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye."

Wear a handsome livery
Of drops of silver finely wrought;
Each one puts on new clothes.
The weather has doffed its cloak
Of wind, and cold, and rain."

We give a few specimens of his English poems composed during his captivity, and of which he wrote a goodly number, whereof some display gallantry towards his princess, others lamentation upon her death. The poems of gallantry open thus:—

"The god Cupide and Venus the goddes
Whiche power han on all worldly gladnes
We hertly gretyng sende of oure humbles
To louers alle."

Here is a short stanza, descriptive of his uxorious regret in being alone:—

"Most goodly fayre if hit were yowre plesere,
So moche forto enriche yowre servant here,
Of recomfort of ioy and of gladnes,
I wolde biseche yow lady and maystres
Nor lete me dye as all in displesere
Syn that in me ther nys wele nor desere,
Saue trewly serue you unto my powere
Without eschewyng payne or hevynes,
For goode doon good wherfore my hertis blis
As for the
I thanke
Myn hert wol evir thynke him silf in greve,
To that desert hit ben to yow y wis,
Of which that long y trust ye shall not mys'
Parcas sumwhat to raunsom yow or eve.
As for the
I thanke."[1]

[1] *Poems written in English*, by Charles, Duke of Orleans; ed. G. W. Taylor, p. 149. In the *Collection des Documents inédits sur l'Histoire de France*, 1835, it is argued that these poems are not by Charles of Orléans, but are translations done by an English contemporary poet.

But, though he can bewail so sweetly the absence of his second spouse, who died during his captivity, he married, immediately after his liberation, in 1440, his third wife, Mary, daughter of the Duke of Cleves. His son Louis, after the death of Charles VIII., became King of France as Louis XII. Perhaps Charles of Orleans, before he was a captive, may have had some lessons in English from his first wife, Isabel, the widow of Richard the Second of England. Sometimes our royal author writes very short lines; for example, when he says

"Swethert
Mercy
For smert
Avert
On sert
Y die
And ye
Ailas
Pite
Parde
On me
Non has
Trewly
Madame
That y
On whi
Shulde dy
Were shame."[1]

At other times he writes in a tripping, lively metre, which is very pretty.[2]

"When that ye goo
Then am y woo
But ye swete foo
For ought y playne
Ye sett not no
To sle me so

[1] *Poems written in English*, by Charles, Duke of Orleans; ed. G. W. Taylor, p. 199.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 200.

Allas and lo
But whi soverayne
Doon ye thus payne
Upon me rayne
Shall y be slayn."

I am inclined to agree with the learned editor of Charles of Orléans' English poems, who says:[1] "The English version has all the spirit of originality, and evinces a masterly knowledge of that language, which would do credit to the native writers cotemporary with the royal French prisoner, from whom, however, no poetic productions have descended to us."

We have now arrived at a royal trouvère, René, Duke of Anjou, Lorraine, and Bar, Count of Provence and Piémont, King of Naples, Sicily, Jerusalem,[2] etc. Like his cousin Charles of Orléans he also was for many years a prisoner; like him, too, he sang chiefly of the pleasures of love and the beauties of nature; and like him, too, he neglected too much his princely duties to occupy himself, when returned from prison, with his curiosities, his painters, and his poets at his castle of Tarascon. And yet he was not such a drivelling old fool as Sir Walter Scott has sketched him,[3] nor such a great hero as two of his French biographers[4] wish to make him out. His daughter, Margaret of Anjou, the wife of Henry VI. of England, appears to have accaparated the spirit which ought to have belonged to her father, who only wished for peace and quietness, and piecemeal abandoned all his estates in order to secure the, to him, priceless boon. He is said to have been an artist. He has also written several devotional and allegorical works in prose and in verse, some tales, a book on tournaments, and a great many short poetical pieces, which bear the impress of a certain true admiration

[1] *Poems written in English*, by Charles, Duke of Orleans; ed. G. W. Taylor, Introduction, p. iv. [2] 1409-1480. [3] *Anne of Geierstein.*
[4] MM. de Villeneuve-Bargemont and de Quatrebarbes.

for the beauties of nature, and a peculiar artlessness of style, not without its charm. We shall give only one example of his descriptive power. In *Regnault et Jehanneton* he describes his own wanderings with his second wife, Jeanne de Laval, along the shores of the Durance, "about the middle of April, when Spring makes already leaf and flower to bud." All kinds of birds sing a hymn in praise of love, the balmy air resounds with their varied song; they fly in couples under the thick foliage, or along the flowery hedges to choose there where to build their nests; the larks mount upwards carolling in the sky; the bees and butterflies flutter from flower to flower; the whispering groves, the murmuring brooks, the wavy meadows, the echoes of the woods and valleys, repeat songs of love; the shepherds and shepherdesses begin to play, when a pilgrim appears on the scene. He sees the shepherdess Jehanneton and the shepherd Regnault at breakfast, and this meal is described as follows in very tripping verselets :—

"The shepherd then made her a present,
Without any more delay,
Of a little barrel
Full of wine, and of a pretty
Little nice well-looking knife,
And of a net, with meshes
Made of hemp. . .
To speech was given respite.
They beginning with good appetite
To eat, and all came out
Of a small basket:
First a little napkin,
Some garlic, also a ham,
And a small soft cheese,
Some shalots,
Some salt, and also some nuts,
And plenty of wild apples,
Salad roots and lettuces,
Champignons.

Thin wine and onions,
Also two saucers of wood,
And of earthenware two bottles;
And the cup
Was of a new bark
Of oak, which the shepherdess,
As a thing pretty and beautiful,
Much valued;
Some milk was kept in it.
Then I saw the shepherd, who took
Some wood and put fire to it;
And Jeanneton
Placed upon it the little kettle;
Then Regnault came near
And supported it with a stick,
That it should not fall." [1]

Is this not a very nice rural breakfast? Onions and shalots may not suit northern palates; there may also not be enough substantial viands for them, but we are in the sunny south, the land of song and garlic, where the heart thirsts for poetry and love, and the palate for alliaceous condiments. The

[1] We give the following lines as a sample of René of Anjou's style :—

" Le pasteur si lui fist présant,
Sans plus tarder lors à présant,
D'un barillet
Plain de vin et d'un joliet,
Petit, constant, gent coustelet,
Et d'une pannetière à plet
Faicte de teille . . .
Au parler fut donné respit.
Eux prenant de bon appétit
A menger, par quoy tout sortit
Du panneron :
Premier ung petit touaillon,
Des aillez, aussi ung jambon
Et ung petit moul fromageon,
Des eschalletes,
Du sel et aussi des noisetes,
Et foison sauvages pommetes,
Des responses et des herbetes,
Des champignons,
Du vin aigre et des oignons,
Aussi de boys deux sausserons,
Et de terre deux goderons ;
Et l'escuelle.
Estoit d'une escorce nouvelle
De chaine, que la pastourelle,
Pour une chose gente et belle,
Bien la tenoit,
Qui du lait gardé l'y avoit,
Puis vy le pasteur qui prenoit
Du boys, et le feu y mectoit ;
Et Janneton.
Mectoit dessus le palleron
Puis Regnault vint à l'environ
Qui le soustenoit d'un baston,
Qu'il ne tombast."

pilgrim continues to listen, and sees the shepherdess show to her shepherd a pair of loving turtledoves, which she upholds as a model of fidelity. Then a quarrel ensues about the relative faithfulness of lovers, and at last they perceive the pilgrim and beg him to be their judge. He puts off his sentence to the next morning, and goes away to say his prayers at the little chapel in the wood, where

"The nice little joyful birds,
So pleasant, gentle, and loving,
Ceased their melodious warbling;
And here and there each did their best
To go and sleep in pairs
Within their very pretty nests,
And no longer sang their songs.

The quails loudly did raise their voices
In the meadows, so that they resounded
In the woods, which were near there;
And then the stags rushed out of the forests,
And came to eat the corn.
Then more than one did listen,
And often kept looking around them.

The partridges also uttered their cries,
And then in covies fled away,
And came down where the fields are,
And there stopped all night.
The bull-flies buzzed through the air;
In other parts the coneys were trotting about
And leaping too at the same time.

The sun was absent,
And no longer showed there,
Nor appeared any where,
Except on the steeple, where what she touched,
Was made rather dazzling;
But scarcely I beheld it,
For I soon lost sight of it.

The screech-owl coming out of his hole,
Was already seated on a tree,
Uttering his wretched and harsh note;
And the bat was flying (to look)
For the sun which was hiding,
And the air was a little more cool,
And I felt it at the top of my fingers." [1]

The pilgrim says his orisons, passes the whole night in prayer, and when he returns to the appointed place next morning, finds the two lovers gone. This is a fair description of the entire pastoral, as perfect as any that exists in the old *fabliaux*, and in which the accurate, minute, and poetical description of landscape is only equalled by the delicate delineation of human feelings, and by the chastity of thoughts. We must, however, admit that now and then some obscure verses, as well as a certain affectation, and some childish play on words, in imitation of the Italian *concetti*, are to be found in it; but of course René, though a king, did not escape the influence of his age and of the times in which he lived.

The last and greatest of the trio is François Villon. His

[1] We shall only give the first two couplets of the lines we quote, in order to show the difference of metre from the extract given on page 247 :—

"Et les gents oiseletz joyeulx,
Plaisans et doulx et amoureulx,
Cessoient leur glay mélodieulx;
Et çà et là chascun qui mieulx
S' alloient couscher deux et deulx
Dedans leurs niz très gracieulx,
Ne plus leurs doulx chans ne chantoient.

Les cailles leurs voix fort haussoient
Es prez, si qu'en retentissoient
Les boys qui près de là estoient;
Et les cerfs lors des fors issoient,
Et ès blez là menger venoient,
Pour ce que plus ainc adonc n'oient
Autour d'eulx souvent regardant.

poems are sermons in *dishabille*, moralities in the garb of looseness, history in romance, philosophy in love-songs. His strength and his weakness are precisely the strength and weakness of much of the French light literature of the present day; and if he inherited these with his nationality, we must not forget that Villon was to some extent the literary progenitor of those who followed him; and that his special characteristics, the qualities which distinguished him from his contemporaries and his predecessors, have been transmitted to succeeding generations from him as their origin. If he took from his race and from his age, he gave back infinitely more; it is the privilege and the glory of every vividly original soul; and it was the privilege of Villon in a more than ordinary degree.

It is true of him, as of Rutebeuf, of Adam de la Halle, of the author of the *Farce de Pathelin*, that we know little of his life beyond what he himself has told us. It was not because he lacked popularity in his own day, but rather because his friends and fellow-countrymen were not given to much writing, and because the generation which immediately followed his own was specially barren of literary activity. Born probably at Paris, in the year 1431, he was of poor parentage, the son of a working man, and of an illiterate mother. He had a taste for reading, and was a graduate of the University of Paris, which was closed in those days by no bar of fortune or birth. He learned there little more than had been learned by Rutebeuf in his day. His nature and true tastes began to display themselves. Less fitted for arduous studies than for a life of pleasure and recklessness, he attained such an eminence amongst his idle companions that they made him their leader in all their madcap enterprises, which included strange and lawless methods of supplying themselves with the means of purchasing their amusements. An awkward circumstance brought this easy though perilous career to an end. He had

been paying court to a beauty who for some time listened favourably to his prayers, but who presently flouted and threw him over. He took revenge with his tongue, perhaps went still farther, and played a few unpleasant practical jokes upon her; whereupon the lady complained to the ecclesiastical authorities; and a graphic picture of the times is brought before our eyes by the fact that the said authorities—perhaps, indeed, the authorities of the university—ordered him to be whipped. Villon underwent his punishment, and then quitted Paris, not, however, without leaving behind him a volume of poems entitled *Lays*, now known as his *Petit Testament*. He was twenty-five years old when this degradation fell upon him, and this, together with his poverty and wretchedness, seemed for a time to destroy every particle of his self-respect. He did not go far from Paris, but hung about the environs in the company of the worst or lowest of both sexes, at one moment steeped to the hair in almost indescribable moral and physical defilement, and the next moment writing witty and even refined poems and ballads. In 1457 we find him in the cells of the Châtelet, condemned to death for some crime or other—not necessarily a very grave one,[1] after any other standard than that of the ruthless laws of the Middle Ages. Of course the trial which preceded the sentence was in itself no trifle, for Villon had undergone "question by water,"[2] long a favourite process in the French courts. The accused was laid out for this examination upon a stretcher, bound thereto with strong cords round his chest, his loins, and his ankles, or else suspended in the air by his four extremities, to each of which was attached a heavy weight. The

[1] According to the latest discovered documents, Villon is said to have been connected with a band of robbers, who even plundered the Collége de Navarre; hence his condemnation.

[2] Such, at least, seems to be the only meaning which we can attach to the following couplet from his *Grand Testament*:—

"On ne m'eust, parmi ce drapel,
Faict boyre à celle escorcherie."

former is the method illustrated in a wood-engraving by Damhoudere, issued at Antwerp just a hundred years after Villon had passed under the ordeal. The executioner then grasped his victim by the nose, until the exhausted lungs forced open his mouth, when, the moment being adroitly seized, some nine litres of water were poured gradually in a continuous stream down the unhappy wretch's throat. Double the quantity of water was employed for the "question extraordinary," and when all was over the (very possibly innocent) man was considerately laid before the fire to dry.[1]

Our poet contrived to escape the capital sentence through the mediation of a prince unnamed, to whom he had cunningly appealed on the day of his daughter's birth. In all probability this friend in need was Charles of Orléans, a sufficiently genuine poet to be beyond the influence of envy. Villon was grateful to his patron, and addressed a copy of verses full of delicate feeling to the infant princess who had so opportunely arrived on the scene. He apostrophises her thus:—

> "O honoured birth, sent here below from heaven;
> Worthy offshoot of the noble lily;
> Most precious gift of Jesus; Mary, most gracious name,
> Fount of pity, source of grace,
> The happy consolation of mine eyes,
> Who dost build and confirm my peace.
> The peace, that is, of the rich,
> The substance of the poor,
> The hiding-place of felons and wretches."[2]

The double allusion to the Virgin and the princess is most judiciously handled; and, be it observed, Villon was a genuinely religious man, doubt it who will, though the lion's share of his life was given rather to the cause than the fact of his repentance.

[1] P. Lacroix, *Mœurs, Usages et Costumes au Moyen Age, Pénalité.*

[2] *Œuvres de Villon*, Jannet, p. 105.

We hear no more of him until 1461, when he turns up at Meung, once more in prison, and this time by order of Bishop Thibault. There he wrote verses for many weary months, it may be for years, cursing at intervals the *folle plaisance* which had led to his sojourn in that dismal hole beneath the moat. Surely he had been more unfortunate or more reckless than ninety-nine out of a hundred of his contemporaries, for his crimes do not appear to have been very heinous in themselves ; or were two imprisonments and a whipping not much more than the average experience of a vagabond of the fifteenth century? And does our poet owe his evil repute chiefly to his garrulous muse? It is by no means improbable. At all events this man suffered enough in his lifetime to make of the poet a devil-may-care and thoroughly disreputable scamp, a rebel of any kind whatsoever. It is not for Englishmen to wonder at such a result, for there is the making of a rebel in nearly every one of them, and nothing would do it more readily than hopeless wretchedness and perpetual oppression. But few Englishmen could have sung out their miseries in graceful and spiritual "ballads." That requires a Rutebeuf, a Villon, a Béranger, a Frenchman in fact ; not caring for the morrow, nor much for personal appearances, but with abounding genius and philosophy and lightness of heart. So our poet went on writing as gaily as ever. It is doubtful how long he survived the prison of Meung, which must have sorely tried his constitution, for he had "to drink water many a morning and evening." Rabelais tells us that Villon had made a journey to England, and that in his old age he retired to Saint Maxent in Poitou, under the favour of a wealthy man, abbé of the said place. There, to entertain the people, he took in hand to produce the play of the Passion in the Poitevin manner and language.[1] Let us hope so. If he ended his life respectably and in comfort

[1] *Pantagruel*, Bk. iv. ch. 13.

he may not have written many more songs in the old gay fashion; but perhaps he had written enough, and old age sings its own mute song of contentment all the better for superfluity of food and warmth and raiment.

It is certain that Villon dabbled in the drama, but all that he has left us of an authentic character is purely lyrical. Of course he was more honoured after his death than before it, and Francis I. encouraged Clément Marot to collect his poems, which was done with a will and with a hearty appreciation. In an octave prefacing this edition, Marot says that if anything is found wrong in it he should be blamed, but that if this edition of Villon is better arranged and more highly valued, thanks should be given for it to the king, "who alone was the cause of the undertaking." The preface of Marot's edition displays editorial instinct of no mean order, but he fell under the lash of the Pléiade for having anything whatever to say to "so miserable a workman" as Villon, and for giving undue importance to "what was worth nothing."

There can be no doubt that Villon, like Byron and a few more of his world-despising sort, blackened his own character out of mere indifference or defiance. We do not for a moment incline to take literally the repulsive word-picture which he draws of himself in *Grosse Margot*, whereof the *envoi* bears its own refutation, or at least its own explanation, on its face.

Reckless, not to say bitter, defiance of the world breathes in too many of his lines. They have maligned, tortured, degraded him: they shall have text for their commentary, and substance for their shadows. But he is not always in this mood. He is fond at times of giving good advice to his old companions, though in giving it he can hardly forbear the final wink of the eye which expresses more than all his words. Read his *Ballade de bonne Doctrine*, which we have not the heart to translate lest it should lose its delicate aroma. Perhaps he is best of all when dealing with "the ladies of Paris,"

or with one or other of the particular ladies on whom he sets his affection for the time being. Turn over the leaves of his works where you will, there are the same overflowing spirits, the same jests and wiles and pranks of wit, the same froth of humour and joyousness; rarely passion of great depth, rarely seriousness of long duration, but just sufficient of each to show that we are in presence of a soul infinitely varied, unstintedly gifted, full of character and human significance, full also of the perplexing inconsistencies and abandonments of genius.

A fair specimen of Villon's pathos, badinage, and grace of treatment combined may be found in this ballad from *Le Grand Testament: Des Dames du Temps Jadis*:—

"Tell me where or in what land
Is Flora, the lovely Roman
Archipiada, or Thaïs,
Who was her cousin-german?
Echo, answering when a sound is thrown
Across the river or over a lake,
Who had a beauty too far beyond her kind?
But where are last year's snows?

Where is the most wise Heloïs?
For whom was mutilated and turned monk
Pierre Abelard at Saint Denys;
For his love he had this punishment.
Where, I ask, is the queen
Who ordered that Buridan
Should be cast in a sack into the Seine?
But where are last year's snows?

The queen, white like a lily,
Who sang with the voice of a siren,
Bertha, the big-footed, Beatrix, Alice
Harembouges, who governed Mayne,
And Jeanne, the good maiden from Lorraine,
Whom the English burned at Rouen:

Where are they, Virgin-Queen?
But where are last year's snows?

Prince, you may ask for a week
Where they are, or for a year,
Yet shall this refrain endure—
But where are last year's snows?"

He was not the only poet, by many thousands, whose best efforts were put forth in the hour of affliction, and whose favour with posterity has sprung, in no slight degree, from the cruelty of their contemporaries. He saw and foresaw this himself, lying in his prison under sentence of death;

[1] "Dictes moy, ou, ne en quel pays
Est Flora la belle Romaine,
Archipiada, ne Thais
Qui fut sa cousine germaine?
Echo parlant quand bruyt on maine
Dessus rivière, ou sus estan,
Qui beaulté eut trop plus que humaine?
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?

Ou est la tressage Helois?
Pour qui fort chastré (et puy Moyne)
Pierre Esbaillart à Sainct Denys
Pour son amour eut cest essoyne.
Semblablement ou est la Royne
Qui commanda que Buridan
Fut jetté en ung sac en Seine?
Mais ou sont sont les neiges d'antan?

La Royne blanche comme ung lys
Qui chantoit à voix de Sereine,
Berthe au grand pied, Biétris, Allys,
Harembouges qui tint le Mayne,
Et Jehanne la bonne Lorraine
Qu' Angloys bruslerent à Rouen.
Ou sont ilz, Vierge souveraine?
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?

Prince n'enquerez de sepmaine
Ou elles sont, ne de cest an,
Que ce refrain ne vous remaine:
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?"

and he tells us that "trouble has sharpened my clumsy thoughts, round as a skein, teaching me more than all the commentaries in the Ethics of Aristotle." He made a jest of his condemnation, as he had made a jest of his masters, of his parents, of his poverty and wretchedness, writing his own epigram in words which could hardly have come from the tongue of a heinous criminal. Yet, side by side with this jest, comes an outburst of that ever-present pathos which was with him so near akin to jest; a challenge which, it may be, he had given to one of his friends, with the petition that he would affix it to a pillar at the ghastly gibbet of Montfaucon when he and his companions should be dangling there in chains—food for the vultures, but not for inhuman gibes :—

" O brother men, who after us endure,
Be not in heart against us hardened;
For if ye show pity on us poor wretches,
God will for this have greater mercy on you.
You see us here suspended, five or six;
As for the flesh which we had over-nourished,
It is long since devoured and rotten,
And we bones are turning to ashes and dust;
Let no man laugh at our evil case,
But pray God that he will absolve us all.'

[1] " Frères humains qui après nous vivez
N'ayez les cueurs contre nous endurcis,
Car si pitié de nous pouvres avez
Dieu en aura plustost de vous merciz;
Vous nous voyez cy attachez, cinq, six;
Quant de la chair, qui trop avons nourrie,
Elle est pieça devorée et pourrie,
Et nous les os, devenous cendre et pouldre;
De nostre mal personne ne s'en rie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre."

BOOK III.

THE RENAISSANCE.

CHAPTER I.

§ 1. Causes of the Renaissance.

Let us for a moment dismiss from our minds the order of the centuries, the succession of dynasties, the political divisions of the world, and, free from interruptions, stand face to face with half-a-dozen facts.

To begin with, let us realise this truth, that heaven, earth, and humanity were discovered within the limits of a lifetime.

Imagine that you exist upon a platform in space, supported you know not how, limited you know not where; that round about you in the firmament of heaven are whirled the sun and moon, the innumerable stars; that somewhere beneath your feet burns the *malebolge* of the wicked, and somewhere above your head stands the paradise of the saints. You have taken all this for granted upon the faith of your father's word; you have had it confirmed from the pulpit and in the lecture room; you have found its sanction in the Bible. You no more think of questioning it than of doubting those other irrefragable facts, that the blood rests in your veins like the wine in a bottle, that the winds blow "where they list," without law or explanation, that every weight falls "downwards," and that to question any of these unquestionable facts would be a grievous offence against the God who made you. And now suppose that you are suddenly made

aware, by incontestable proofs and confirmations, that the belief of your life has been false; that from your youth upwards you have been living in gross darkness, and accepting "a vain thing fondly imagined." Suppose that a new teacher —a dozen new teachers—arise, who convince you by an altogether novel process of argument, by an appeal to faculties which you had scarcely yet ventured to exercise, and which you now exercise almost against your will, that the world whereon you live is not flat but round, not fixed but moving, and moving with a double motion, round an axis and round a point, moving at a pace which it makes you giddy to contemplate, and which can never be appreciated or illustrated by any process within our mental grasp. Suppose yourself forced to admit that the unquestionableness of these new and stupendous facts is of an entirely different kind from the unquestionableness of your previous faith, no more absolute in its degree, but beyond the reach of uncertainty in its character. Suppose, again, that you are informed of other worlds of men existing on the earth which you had imagined to be parcelled out between yourself and your neighbours, that you speak with travellers who have been there, and who describe to you these new-discovered races—their manners, their appearance, their civilisations;—and that, in short, you begin to realise how different are the maps of heaven and earth from those which you had been wont to keep before your eyes. And finally, suppose that, contemplating all these, and a score of facts besides—foremost amongst them the discovery of a process by which the copies of a book may be multiplied indefinitely, thus assuring at once the preservation and wider dissemination of sacred and profane knowledge — you are astounded at the grandeur, the richness, the promise of the vista opened before you; you perceive your duty to God, to the Church, to humanity, in a new light; you rebel against your former ignorance, and against those to whom you con-

ceive it to have been due. A vast change comes over you, for which you are at a loss to account; but presently the explanation is discovered. You have ceased to be content with deductions from the mind to the senses, but require your mind to interpret your senses. You are no longer before all things a votary of faith, but admit yourself to be a convert of reason.

Enter into the spirit of this contrast between your first and your last condition, perceive the full nature and extent of your advance, and then tell us the result. Is it not a revolution, a reconception, a *renaissance?*

In the sixteenth century men found themselves in this predicament. Columbus had discovered America a few years before the century commenced. Copernicus and Galileo explored the heavens, and hung the revolving world in space. Luther and Calvin liberated the soul, as Rabelais and Montaigne liberated the mind, and as Shakspeare and Cervantes gave wings to the imagination. The art of printing had already reaped its first triumphs, and more than realised the anticipations of its inventors. It had been the principal means of carrying back the attention of the world to classical antiquity, and of restoring the rich treasures of Greek and Latin literature. By this service alone it deserved to rank with the discoveries of the astronomers, and to be compared with the intellectual conquests of the reformers. More than once in the Middle Ages attempts had been made, from the days of Alcuin to the days of Abelard and Occam, to reconquer the lost learning of the world—now through the schoolmen, now by rejection of the schoolmen's barren methods: now through the medium of profane literature, now by the ineffectual aid of religious philosophy; but the effort had failed. "The struggle of the Middle Ages," says a brilliant French historian,[1] "had been continually directed

[1] Michelet, *Renaissance*, Introd.

against a relapse into nature. With partial and temporary successes, they encountered frequent and long rebuffs. The revolution of the sixteenth century, occurring more than a hundred years after the death of the preceding philosophy, found an inconceivable absence of life, a complete blank, and sprang from the loins of nothing. It was the heroic offspring of a vast exercise of will." The art of printing aided it, but slowly and imperfectly; aided it by resuscitation of the ancient intellectual forms, but at the same time obstructed it by the perpetuation of the modern vacuities. "If they published antiquity, yet on the other hand they published the Middle Ages, and above all the class-books, summaries, abstracts, the whole doctrine of folly, the manuals of confessors and the cases of conscience; ten Nyders for one Iliad; with one Virgil a score of Fichets."[1] If the Renaissance could not have been without the discovery of printing, it triumphed almost in spite of it.

§ 2. The Renaissance in France.

The phases of this revolution—or rather, of this new evolution of the human intellect—were many; and its results upon the literary and political progress of France were such that the nation may be said to have passed from childhood to adolescence without the interval of boyhood. The new light which had been admitted into the minds of men, having once pierced the mists and clouds of their ignorance, could never thereafter be extinguished, though there were many who would have thought that by extinguishing it they would

[1] Michelet, *Renaissance*, Introd. Nyder was a famous German theologian who died about 1440, after destroying thousands of Bohemians in a crusade, and several of whose works were reprinted at Paris early in the sixteenth century. His most ridiculous book is called *Formicarium*. Fichet was a theologian, an orator, and rector of the University of Paris in 1467. His letters and treatise on Rhetoric were printed in Paris, 1470-1474.

render God service. The fruit of the forbidden tree had been tasted, and, strange to say, tasted with impunity; for the sword of the Church had no terrors when it was known that the Eden on which men had turned their backs was but a paradise of fools, a garden of sloth and ignorance and superstition. Yet it was more than an unsubstantial sword which was turned against those who had braved the proscription of freedom and knowledge, and who, with the enthusiasm of a lofty rebellion, set themselves to till, with the sweat of their brains, the intellectual ground upon which Church and Parliaments, kings and doctors, had planted the briers and thistles of their curse. Political liberty and power were regarded as the sacred monopoly of a privileged class, waived only on rare occasions in behalf of such as managed to flatter the pride or disarm the prejudices of the ruling minds, and jealously guarded by Parliaments which were themselves subservient to the monarchy and the Church. Liberty of discussion, freedom of tongue and pen, were sternly limited, not only by ecclesiastical despotism, but by the universities themselves, and in particular by the right of censure vested in the Sorbonne. Liberty of belief, of religious inquiry and theological controversy, was repressed by the vast influence and wealth of the Church, which could at need set in motion every political engine in the state; which never hesitated to hurl its anathemas against all who raised the note of scepticism or denial; which had its stake for the recusant, its army of Jesuits for the suspected, its almost equally powerful league for those who ventured to whisper of reform. Royalty, which began by sympathising with the Renaissance and the Reformation, ended by casting in its lot with the champions of darkness; yet selfishly enough, always for its own interest, burning Huguenots in France, but allying itself with Protestants in Germany; combining with the Church against the Huguenots, with the Reformation against the Ligue, crushing one sup-

posed enemy by the aid of another, and escaping for a time, not without difficulty, from the fury of insurrection and from the peril of the assassin.[1]

Thus the Renaissance in France had its baptism of blood, and only by a long and cruel struggle attained in the end the right to exist. In England it had less to fear. Henry the Eighth, indeed, would have crushed it by the sheer brutality of a prejudiced mind. Himself a scholar, he would fain have been the only one in his kingdom; hostile to the Church from the desire of an illicit freedom, he was hostile to intellectual progress from the wantonness of a fastidious autocracy. Under his eldest daughter the supremacy of the ecclesiastics was once more established; but their brief fury was directed rather against religious than against intellectual freedom. In England it was the Reformation which had to pass through fire and blood; the Renaissance worked its way almost without obstacle or check. Yet France had her consolation for this agony. Her political and literary triumphs were delayed, but not less sure; and in the end she has been the first to reach the threshold of that complete mental emancipation to which Rabelais and Montaigne almost unconsciously looked forward.

The manifold energy of the Renaissance manifested itself in all its militant vigour and intensity during the sixteenth century. By its resort to the models of antiquity, by its keen-edged and polished satire, by its rehabilitation of philosophy and jurisprudence, by its spirit of scepticism, by its reformation of religion, at least attempted from within the Church, this crisis of intellectual thought in France gave evidence of all the highest faculties and capabilities of the national mind. We must study each phenomenon in its turn before we can hope to realise the power and the achievements of this newly awakened activity

[1] Lenient, *Satire en France*, Introd.

Have we made too much of indirect causes, of impressions, of the influence of discoveries and new facts, in our attempt to place ourselves at the source of the Renaissance in France? Let us hasten to remove the impression, which would undoubtedly be false and incomplete. The action of man upon man is, at all events as a general rule, superior in force to the action of a formula or of a fact. We have said it before ; the man's effect upon his generation is distinct from the effect of the generation upon the man, and may, on occasion, be the greater. Was there a man, or were there a group of men, who can take high rank amongst the influences which brought about the French Renaissance? The revelations of science, the discoveries of geographers, the spread of ancient lore by means of the printing press, could sharpen the intellect and excite the imagination; but could they refine the taste and develope the literary style? The study of antiquity undoubtedly could; but hardly so the new facts of physical science. Beyond question there were individual human agencies at work in this grand revival of thought and imagination—agencies which set at nought the boundaries of race, tongue, and nationality, which traversed the Alps from a regenerate Italy, and brought a new Roman conquest into modern Gaul. As Montaigne and Ronsard and Pascal were destined to have their schools of imitation and disciples, so were Petrarch and Boccaccio, the Medici and the Borgias, Lascaris, Leonardo da Vinci, Poggi, Bembo, Politian, amongst the first leaders of the resuscitated intellect of France. For the revolt against the darkness of the Middle Ages began on classical soil; antiquity was renewed in the home of its original glory. Italy had never been so overwhelmed with the grossness of mediæval ignorance as were the countries of western and northern Europe. The Italian poets and romancists of the fourteenth century had handled manuscripts which the monks and ecclesiastics contemptuously left as a prey to the dust and the worm,

or cut up into missals and talismans for women and children. Petrarch himself, not ashamed to draw occasional inspiration from the delicate poetry of Provence, virtually inaugurated the Italian Renaissance, though the Popes Alexander VI. and Leo X. were to foster and bring it to completion by their polished taste and munificent encouragement. In the fifteenth century Italy could boast a crowd of lofty intellects, ripe scholars, and worthy cultivators of the Muses. Machiavelli wrote his immortal treatise on the art of government,[1] and commented on the History of Livy. Cardinal Bembo, the friend and admirer of Lucrezia Borgia, herself a woman of cultivated taste, and the daughter of a Pope, was an elegant scholar and writer, saturated by the classical spirit, as learned and as polished an ecclesiastic as the Gallo-Roman Sidonius. Poggi epitomised in his *Facetiæ* the wit and cynicism of a life whose severer studies were given to the legacies of classic Rome. It took fifty years for these artists and men of taste—for, in fact, if we except Machiavelli, they were little more—to arouse the eager fancies of the northern nations; but their influence gradually made itself felt, and thus added precisely the necessary complement to the intellectual awakening produced by the circumstances previously referred to.

It was on the last day of 1494 that Charles the Eighth of France, who had thoroughly united the never yet homogeneous country, entered Rome as a conquering invader amidst a gorgeous pageantry of triumph. He showed to the Italians for the first time the superiority in warfare which Cæsar had by brute force impressed upon the barbarous Gaul, refined and elevated into an art. The national genius of the northern race had its victory of revenge over the genius of the south; a victory of the intellect which Frenchmen have always preferred, in their inmost heart, to the coarse supremacy of gunpowder, sinews, and steel. But if Charles

[1] *Il Principe.*

brought a lesson with him, he took a lesson back; France, united, having conceived and grasped the idea of nationality, had become the most powerful nation of continental Europe. Philippe Pot had said from his place in Parliament—himself being a favoured courtier of Louis the Eleventh—"All power comes from the people; all power returns to it. And by the people I mean the mass of men; I do not except a single inhabitant of the kingdom. The people has made the kings, and it is for the people that they reign. The king gone, the power pertains to the State."[1] And, strong in this idea, France had begun to throw itself into the old groove of war and conquest, forasmuch as its kings knew of no better way. But Italy was to instruct her ancient tributary, and to show her the path to victories more glorious and complete than the victory of arms. The human intellect, the mind and spirit of the nation, provided a field of battle whereof the triumphs, no less difficult of attainment, were infinitely more permanent and assured, incalculably more grand, and fraught with better augury for the welfare and the satisfaction of the nation. Of such a kind was the moral of Italian art and literature in the fifteenth century; and France did not fail to see it and apply it to herself. The country which had yielded to the fascination of the later Roman Empire was docile to learn from regenerate Italy; and it was but natural that the taste for classical antiquity should be amongst its first evidences of the revival.

The art of printing had not been slow in bringing ancient literary documents within the reach of almost every studious man. It was in 1474 that William Caxton printed his first book. Before the end of that century the Venetian Aldi had produced an edition of Aristotle in Greek. Demosthenes, Plutarch, Livy, Cicero, Tacitus, followed in rapid succession. After the text came the commentaries. Rival printers ran-

[1] Cf. Michelet, *Renaissance*, p. 180.

sacked the manuscripts of every age to discover fit subjects wherewith to appeal to an anxious public. Henceforth men began to live in and by antiquity, which absorbed them from the world, and passed through its severe yet congenial discipline the souls that were to react upon future generations by their culture and their originality. To this day the classical source inspires us; and we can imagine the effect produced upon the blank minds of men to whom a whole intellectual world was thus suddenly opened up. They were intoxicated with the unaccustomed draught; they lived again in the brilliant days which had produced so noble a generation; they made themselves fellow-citizens with Cicero and Livy, with Thucydides and Demosthenes; they reproduced the very failings and beliefs of the classical age. Never was there an apter illustration of the fact that the author of a literary document, himself the creation of his own age, becomes from that moment a potent creator of the ages to come. Greece and Rome have conquered more in their death than when they sent out an Alexander and a Cæsar to trample on the liberties of the world.

France had her Medici, her Elizabeth, her guardian and nourisher of learning, in the early days of Francis the First. It is true that he was one of those to whom we have referred as subjecting all things to their political needs, and playing off friend against friend, foe against foe. It is true that he closed the printing-presses in 1535, twenty years after his accession; that he established the censure of the Sorbonne, and made it a capital offence to publish a religious book without its authorisation; that he burned Berquin and Etienne Dolet, and sanctioned the massacre of heretics. Nevertheless he began well, and he did good service to letters. He founded the Collége de France, establishing chairs of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew; he emulated Charlemagne by inviting learned foreigners to his court; he encouraged art, and went so far

in the liberal path, condemned and hated by the ecclesiastics, as to direct Clément Marot to edit the poems of Villon. A strange anomaly, whom literature can neither love nor despise; and yet a strangely apposite picture of the century which he ushered in, full of contrasts and contradictions, of chaotic discord and of splendid illumination.

§ 3 Budaeus and his Fellow-Workers.

Amongst the distinguished men who shed lustre on the court of Francis the First was Budaeus (Guillaume Budé),[1] the most industrious and noted classical scholar of his age. Born at Paris of wealthy parents, in the same year as his friend and rival Erasmus, he had already gained a great literary reputation before Francis arrived at the throne. Throughout his life he retained the favour and esteem of his versatile and fickle patron, and was the firm promoter and even protector of learning, assisting the king in the encouragement of letters, and withstanding him, if need be, in his retrograde moods. It was to a great extent by his advice that Francis the First determined on founding the Collége de France—originally styled the *Collége des Trois Langues*—which was set on foot in the year 1531, and which contained not only chairs of Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, but also professorships of Mathematics, Philosophy, and Medicine. Erasmus was invited from Rotterdam to occupy the position of its first principal; but, though he loved Paris well, and frequently visited it, especially during the residence there of Budé, he declined the proffered honour. The reason which this Voltaire of the sixteenth century, as he has been called, privately alleged for this determination is characteristic. "Of all the birds," he says, "the eagle is the only one which has seemed to the wise

[1] 1467-1540.

folk worthily to represent royalty; it has neither beauty nor song, but it is carnivorous, a bird of prey, a thief, a devastator, a wrangler, a solitary; hated of all, the scourge of all, it has immense power of injury, and still more inclination than power." He remembered that the King of France had a beast of prey for his emblem; and he preferred to live in learned seclusion at Basle, with friends such as the Frobens, with distinguished visitors and correspondents, and amidst literary consolations such as he knew how to find in the composition of works like his *Colloquia*.

Budé's own literary labours were confined to learned exegesis and commentaries. He wrote annotations on the Pandects, applying the acuteness of a philologist and the judgment of an historian to the elucidation of Roman law; a treatise *De Asse*, upon the varying value of Roman money in successive ages; and an inestimable contribution to Greek etymological knowledge, the work of a genuine grammarian, his Commentaries on the Greek language. He does not seem to have ever fully mastered the difficulties of French style; or, at least, he has left us nothing of importance written in French. The general adoption by learned men in the Renaissance period of the Latin language as a medium for the diffusion of their writings was very natural. They must have been comparatively few in that age who mastered the modern foreign tongues; whilst translations from one to the other were both rare and slowly effected. It would have been useless for a man like Budé, and perhaps even difficult, to write in his native language; so that for him, and the many scholars situated like him, Latin was almost the only available medium. And, in general, the scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who in fact wrote mainly for each other and for the universities, were constrained to adopt the one language which was common to them all. Budé's influence upon French literature was therefore an indirect one, acting through the

minds of those who, receiving a learned education in their youth, passed by natural preference to the more popular domains of literary activity. It is not difficult to imagine, though it might be hard to estimate precisely, the true and immediate value of such a man in such an age. But a single trait is recorded of him which says more than a dozen suppositions. One day he was informed—in the house from which, during ten years, he was hardly ever known to emerge—that a couple of monks had been thrown into prison for their contumacy in secretly applying themselves to the study of Greek. Budé at once applied to the king, and urged their release. He obtained his request, little thinking of the significance which future ages would perceive in the story of Budé, the scholar, throwing his ægis over Rabelais, the satirist.

The fellow-workers and immediate successors of Budé in the cultivation of the classical tongues were many. At the Collége de France we find Vatable, Danès, Toussain, Turnèbe, Lambin; the latter so notoriously circumspect in the work which he undertook, that he has enriched the vocabulary of his native tongue by the hardly-merited prostitution of his name.[1] Better known even than these were Robert and Henri Estienne, father and son, the first a printer of the Holy Scriptures, who, his orthodoxy being suspected, thought it prudent to end his days in Geneva; the latter, author of perhaps the grandest monument of sixteenth century scholarship,[2] and a pamphleteer in French of no mean order. Henri Estienne was as ardent a politician as he was a laborious scholar, and, if a polished Latinist, yet before all things a Frenchman. Catherine de Medici had introduced the worst vices of Italy into France, and had led a fashion which Estienne and his friends could not but regard with disgust and alarm. He

[1] *Lambiner*, to dawdle.

[2] *Thesaurus Græcæ Linguæ*, published in 1572, the same year as the S Bartholomew massacres.

wrote then his *Deux dialogues du nouveau Français italianisé;* a bitter, unstinting, terrible satire. It cost him dear; for the ecclesiastical consistory of Geneva, where it was issued, summoned the writer before them, censured him severely, and banished him from communion. The stiff-backed old scholar, fallen upon evil times, would neither bend nor break; but the remainder of his life was a lonely and miserable exile. Harder still was the fate of Etienne Dolet, a student and a scholar, who became a printer at Lyons, and probably owed his license to print to the fact that he had written a Commentary on the Latin language, which he dedicated to Francis the First. Representative of that formidable revolt against tyranny which found in the printing-press its readiest engine of attack—member of that redoubtable school of irony which incessantly hurled its missiles against priests and wrongs from across the frontiers of Switzerland, his bitterest work was *Le Second Enfer*, directed against the abuses of legal administration. He was several times accused of heresy, and became at last involved in a dispute about the merits of Cicero, in which he certainly showed great powers of sarcasm. Thirteen works, either printed or written by Dolet, were condemned to be burned by the Parliament of Paris on the 14th of February 1543. Our printer thereupon fled to Piedmont; but after a short time came back to Lyons, and published a translation into French of two dialogues of Plato. The Faculty of Theology of Paris found that he had badly translated a certain passage of the Greek philosopher, declared him an *athée relaps*, and burned him on the Place Maubert in the capital, together with his books, after having tortured him with great cruelty. Thus perished a young man of thirty-seven years of age, who suffered for that madness of learning, that enthusiasm for the light, which possessed so many of his contemporaries; who paid with his life for having flayed with cutting satire the champions of ignorance and darkness; for having doubts

raised as to his orthodoxy. Read the death-song of this brave and noble soul, and say if the Renaissance had not already set its seal upon the century :—

"When they shall have either burned or hanged me,
Put upon the wheel or quartered ;
What shall be the result ? It will be a dead body !
Alas ! however, shall they have no remorse
For putting to death so cruelly
One who has in nowise done ill ?
Is a man of so small a value ?
Is he a fly ? or a worm which deserves
Without any regard to be destroyed so soon ?
Is a man so soon shaped and well-informed,
So soon provided with science and virtue,
To be thus like a blade of grass or a straw
Annihilated ? Do they prize so little
A noble mind ?" [1] . . .

[1] "Quand on m aura ou bruslé, ou pendu,
Mis sur la roue et en cartiers fendu ;
Qu'en sera-t-il ? Ce sera ung corps mort !
Las ! toutes fois n'auroit-on nul remord
De fayre ainsi mourir cruellement
Ung qui en rien n'a forfait nullement ?
Ung homme est-il de valeur si petite ?
Est-ce une mouche ? ou un ver qui mérite
Sans nul esgard si tost estre destruict ?
Ung homme est-il si tost faict et instruict,
Si tost muny de science et vertu,
Pour estre ainsy qu'une paille ou festu
Anéanti ? Faict-on si peu de compte
D'ung noble esprit ?" . . .

CHAPTER II.

§ 1. Satire in the Renaissance.

With free thought comes, in England, stubborn dissent; in France, light-hearted satire. The antithesis is partial and incomplete, but it is a significant one. Satire is at the root of the French character, an instinct amongst the descendants of the ancient Gauls, who loved to fight and to talk well; and it requires no evidence to assure us that an overflowing manifestation of *l'esprit narquois* was amongst the immediate and notable effects of the nation's intellectual revolt. The religious rebellion of the sixteenth century produced Protestantism; the moral rebellion brought defiance of king, parliament, and college. Both alike were put down by fire and sword. With what result? In England, again, the result was armed insurrection, civil war, an obstinate assertion and vindication of the right to think and worship in any one of a hundred different ways. In France there was bloodshed, it is true, but rather the bloodshed of massacre than of war; and, in the end, the victory of obscurantism. But in France men had other weapons, and they used them, as we might anticipate, with even greater ultimate effect than sword and powder. They vindicated the rights of thought with the arms of thought; they crushed the wielders of many legions with a word. Satire was the blade in which they trusted, and their trust was not misplaced. Their judges send them to the stake and the wheel, hang them, draw and quarter them. They sing a song on

their way to the shambles which makes their judges tremble; for a nation which knows how to use satire knows also how to feel it. The Sorbonne condemns a book, the ecclesiastical tribunals excommunicate its author; straightway from Savoy, from Spain, from Holland, comes a pamphlet, or a poem, or a single couplet, and the victors become the victims. The anger of authority is visited upon a popular writer, who by some trifling act has overstepped the narrow line prescribed for him. An allusion, a jest, an epithet, so delicately insinuated that it eludes the grasp of a lynx-eyed censorship, damns the reprover for all time.

The Middle Ages had their satire, as we have already found, but it was as nothing to the torrent of raillery, invective, trenchant irony, biting malice, of the sixteenth century. The sister of Francis the First led the way, Marguerite, the well-known Queen of Navarre,[1] In the *Heptaméron* she vents her contemptuous scorn upon husbands, though she was not unmarried; against monks, though she was an ardent devotee of religion; against lawyers and doctors, though she was a queen. And her shrewdest satire of all is unconsciously pointed against herself, for she stands revealed to us as a very woman, the rivals for whose favour are God and the Devil, and who affords to neither of these more than a short and coquettish glance. Nevertheless she deserves better of literature than of her lovers, if she had any, for her little kingdom was the refuge of free thought against the persecutions of her brother and his friends. Her own gentleman-in-waiting, Bonaventure Desperriers,[2] the intimate of Marot, was a free-lance after her own heart, light in love and faith, who began by playing soft nothings to his mistress on the lute, and ended by publishing his *Cymbalum Mundi*—a somewhat vague and incomprehensible prose work, and yet a firebrand amongst his enemies. Its

[1] 1492-1549. [2] Died about 1544.

printer was thrown into a dungeon, the impression was seized and burnt; a hundred and fifty years later Bayle could not discover a copy. Etienne Pasquier said that it ought to be cast into the fire with its author; even Henri Estienne called it detestable; but Marguerite of Navarre was delighted at the sensation which her favourite attendant had created. It is difficult for us, in these days, to understand the rage excited by such works as the *Cymbalum Mundi;* but we must remember that to priests and the Sorbonne even the attempt at satire was a crime, and the slightest show of wit at their expense savoured of impious rebellion against heaven. Desperriers was not exempt from the fate of so many of his contemporaries who were made martyrs to the emancipation of human thought. He was hunted to death; and, it is said, took his own life in a fit of despair and despondency.

Clément Marot,[1] *valet-de chambre* of Francis the First, is another Frenchman of this century whose name must appear on more than one page of his country's literary history. He, too, was a satirist of a trenchant character; he, too, paid with his life the penalty of his liberty, dying a miserable and persecuted exile. In his life, his character, his genius, he is a type of the age in which he lived. At once a pedant and a vagabond, a scholar and a merry-andrew, a man of letters and an *enfant sans souci*, ennobled by education and degraded by the very intoxication of knowledge, unable to preserve his balance under the burden of a thousand new ideas, now adding lustre to learning, now trailing the dignity of authorship in the mire, Clément Marot was one of those *enfants terribles* of his day, who it may be confessed, did much to justify the restrictions imposed upon the cultivators of literature. His poems are as varied as were his personal moods. He edited Villon, and modernised Jean de Meung; he versified two *Colloquia* of Erasmus and the parable of the Good Shepherd; he trans-

[1] 1495-1544.

lated the *Penitential Psalms* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses;* he wrote the praises of Saint Christina and sang the triumphs of Cupid; he composed innumerable rondeaux, ballads, songs, epigrams, epistles in verse. His translated psalms, which he dedicated to Francis the First and to the ladies of France, "soon eclipsed the brilliancy of his madrigals and sonnets. Not suspecting how prejudicial the predominant rage of psalm-singing might prove to the ancient religion of Europe, the Catholics themselves adopted these sacred songs as serious ballads, and as a more rational specimen of domestic merriment. They were the common accompaniments of the fiddle. They were sold so rapidly that the printers could not supply the public with copies. In the festive and splendid court of Francis the First, of a sudden nothing was heard but the psalms of Clément Marot. By each of the royal family and the principal nobility of the court a psalm was chosen and fitted to the ballad tune which each liked best. The Dauphin, Prince Henry, who delighted in hunting, was fond of *Ainsi qu'on oit le cerf bruire,* or *Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks,* which he constantly sang in going out to the chase. Madame de Valentinois . . . took *Du fond de ma pensée,* or, *From the depth of my heart, O Lord.* The queen's favourite was, *Ne veuilles pas, O Sire,* that is, *O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation,* which she sang to a fashionable jig (tune). Antony, King of Navarre, sang, *Revenge moy, prens la querelle,* or *Stand up, O Lord, to revenge my quarrel,* to the air of a dance of Poitou. It was on very different principles that psalmody flourished in the gloomy court of Cromwell. This fashion does not seem in the least to have diminished the gaiety and good humour of the court of Francis." [1]

Clément Marot, like Thibaut of Champagne, to whom indeed he bore a certain literary resemblance, aspired sufficiently high in his rhymes and in his acts, for it is rumoured

[1] Warton, *History of English Poetry,* vol. iv. § 45, pp. 125, 126.

that Diana of Poitiers was his Blanche of Castile. If this be true she proved by far the most perilous object of devotion, and if the foolhardy poet met her scorn by satire, the king's mistress found a weapon more powerful still. Marot was accused of a terrible crime—the eating of bacon in Lent; and imprisonment—not the first—followed as a matter of course. Straightway he poured forth a flood of rhyme. He wrote to Bouchart, the inquisitor, protesting his orthodoxy: "I am neither a Lutheran, a Zwinglian, nor even an Anabaptist . . . but, in short, I am one who believes, honours, and values the holy, true, and Catholic Church." He addressed the fable of *The Lion and the Rat* to his friend Lyon Jamet, entreating him to use his influence to get him out of prison; and, at the same time he could not refrain from the very crime of satire which caused all his troubles. He wrote an offensive ballad concerning Diana of Poitiers,[1]—at least so it was said—and even went so far as to lampoon his judges. When the king returned to Paris he was liberated; but he had made too many enemies to be comfortable in France. All whom he had ever railed at were bent on his destruction; and a great many persons of influence were included in the number. At all events an anonymous copy of verses, *Adieux aux Dames de Paris*, was laid to his charge,[2] and it was said that none could hold herself safe from the author's bitter jests. Marot declared that he had

[1] One stanza follows :—

"Un jour j'écrivis à ma mie
Son injustice seulement,
Mais elle ne fut endormie
A me le rendre chaudement.
Car dès l'heure tint parlement
A je ne sais quel papelard,
Et lui dit tout bellement :
'Prenez-le, il a mangé le lard.'"

[2] "Adieu Paris, la bonne ville,
Adieu de Meaux la Jeanneton,
Adieu Lieutenante Civile,
Adieu la Grive et Caqueton."

no hand in the production; and in order to acquit himself of blame, wrote a new satire,[1] hardly less daring than the first, and with one candid line in which he might be held almost to have belied his denial: "A worm, when he is trod upon, bites." Once more the king protected him, but our poet thought it most prudent to flee to Navarre; and, not allowed to rest even there, crossed the Alps and took refuge in Ferrara. It was during his exile that he wrote to Lyon Jamet his *Trois Epîtres du Coq-à l'Ane;* nonsense verses of a peculiar light and pliable kind—*vers de société*, in which Marot excelled, and which were specially adapted for the conveyance of satirical allusions. But he soon tired of his banishment; and, it is said, abjuring Calvinism as he had previously abjured Romanism, he made friends with the Dauphin, patched up a truce with his enemies, and returned to Paris. There he lived quiet for some years, but his petty rivals would not leave him in peace, and Marot found it impossible to be silent under their reproaches. Another outburst of satire followed, in which he contrived to overwhelm the poetasters Sagon, la Huèterie, and the "whole heap of new scribblers." Moreover the Sorbonne declared his translation of the Psalms, which he had only lately brought out—and of which we have already spoken—heretical, and remonstrated with the king for having allowed them to be dedicated to him. Calvin—to his praise be it said—offered the poet an asylum at Geneva; but Marot preferred to settle in Piedmont, and there he ended his adventurous career.

Marot has perhaps hardly received the attention which he deserves from his own countrymen, although Boileau recommended him as a model of elegant *badinage*. "Much talked of, but seldom read," a French critic[2] says of him. "We do not read with pleasure that which has need of a dictionary to explain it;"—an unfortunate confession of unfamiliarity with

[1] Epître 46. [2] Dussault, *Annales littéraires*, vol. i. p. 198.

half of what is sweetest and freshest in literature. "Villon and Marot," says another critic,[1] "and some others are satirical poets; their epigrams may be said to be the only titles they have to celebrity in the present day." And yet Marot has received greater honour out of his own country. Spenser knew and loved his works, and is indeed largely indebted to him in his eclogue of *Pan and Robin* in the "Shepheard's Calendar." It is possible that Marot may have read Chaucer. His *Temple Cupidique* reminds us more than once of the English poet, and its first lines would seem to be a close copy of the opening of the "Canterbury Tales"—

> "Sur le printemps que la belle Flora
> Les champs couverts de diverse fleur a,
> E son amy Zephyrus les esvente
> Quand doucement en l'air souspire e vente."

In this allegory Marot represents himself as setting forth on a journey in search of the goddess Ferme-amour; and coming at last to the temple of Cupid he is graciously admitted by Bel-accueil, and approaches the altar of the god. Let one specimen of the simple and flowing verse suffice:—

> "The diadem of Cupid
> Is a chaplet of roses,
> Which Venus herself gathered
> In her verdant garden,
> And in the early spring
> Sent it to her dear child
> Who gladly put it on;
> Then, for these lovely roses, gave
> To his mother a triumphal car
> Dragged by a dozen doves.
> Before the altar two singular cypresses
> I saw flourishing, breathing forth sweet odours;
> And they told me those were the pillars

[1] Avenel, in the *Lycée français*, vol. ii. p. 106,—a literary miscellany published early in the present century.

Of the high altar of lofty Fame.
Then a thousand birds from a distant grove
Came flying upon this green canopy,
Ready to sing divine songs.
So I asked why they had come there:
But they said to me, Friend, these are the matins
Which they have come to sing in honour of Venus."[1]

§ 2. Rabelais.

We have now come to Rabelais,[2] the greatest satirist of the age, perhaps the greatest satirist of France, whose death occurred midway in the sixteenth century, and around whom all the lesser satirists revolve in ever-widening orbits. A monk to begin with, a voracious scholar and indefatigable thinker, who, probably about 1523, had been rescued by Budé from the punishment attending his persistent and illicit study of Greek, his fame rests not upon ecclesiastical labours or

[1] "De Cupidon le diademe
Est de roses un chapelet,
Que Venus cuellit elle même
Dedans son jardin verdelet,
Et sur le printemps nouvelet
Le transmit à son cher enfant
Qui de bon cœur le va coiffant;
Puis donna pour ces roses belles
A sa mère un char triomphant
Conduit par douze colombelles.
Devant l'autel deux cypres singuliers
Je vey fleurir sous odeur embasmée:
Et me dit-on que c'etoient les pilliers
Du grand autel de haulte renommée.
Lors mille oiscaux d'une longue ramée
Viendront voler sur ces vertes courtines,
Prestz de chanter chansonettes divines.
Si demanday pourquoi là sont venus:
Mais on me dit, amy, ce sont matines,
Qu'ilz viennent dire en l'honneur de Venus.

[2] 1483-1553.

classical scholarship, but upon the rough coarse humour and unmerciful satire of a couple of works in which he lashed his age and his profession. He lived scarcely long enough after the appearance of the last part of *Pantagruel* to experience the persecutions which had fallen so heavily upon the heads of his contemporaries; and, moreover, he was not a man to court reproof and repression, like Marot. Let it be well understood, Rabelais was in his writings a buffoon, a licentious jester, despising and outraging the proprieties, railing at religion and mocking at decency, coarse though never prurient; but in his private life he was—there is at least nothing to the contrary—a respectable and outwardly moral man, a consistent Catholic, who preserved the respect of his superiors. Entering the monastic life as a Franciscan, he transferred his allegiance under a bull of Pope Clement VII. to the Benedictines. Dissatisfied with his vocation, he took a degree in medicine, and apparently practised for some time as a physician; then, reverting to his first choice, he was restored by Paul III. to the order of St. Benedict. Once more wearying of the cowl, he obtained the vicarage of Meudon, near Paris, and occupied it until his death. This is no doubt the career of a restless man, but not of an open or imprudent railer; and it is the career of one who had influence in the highest quarters, and who was careful not to throw it away. His *Gargantua* and the three first parts of *Pantagruel* were issued under an assumed name,[1] so that there was at all events no personal scandal beyond the ranks of the learned. And yet all this put together is not sufficient to account for the comparative leniency with which the most monstrous attack on Church, schools, and civil authority was treated, and even regarded, by so intolerant a censorship.

There was, in fact, a saving clause. Rabelais is intensely,

[1] Not, however, concealed by more than an anagram. His *nom de plume* was Alcofribas Nasier.

villainously, obtrusively coarse. Strange fact, but none the less true, that this very coarseness of humour and illustration obtained for him his immunity from persecution, and secured for his bitter flagellations a currency which the most refined and decorous wit, the most polished scholarship, would never have gained for them. It was, indeed, the polish and the scholarship of Marot, Estienne, and Dolet, which made their invectives so formidable to the Church, which attracted the attention and drew down the anger of the Sorbonne. Their pamphlets and poems were addressed directly to men of culture and keen perceptions, and glanced off at once towards those whose culture and perception made them specially vulnerable to such modes of attack. Rabelais, on the other hand, addressed himself ostensibly to the vulgar, or say rather to such as preferred coarseness to polish and a laugh to a stab. His were essentially funny stories, not bitter poems or scathing pamphlets. So at least the ecclesiastics must have thought, and so, no doubt, Rabelais intended them to think. In addition, he chose an archaic style of writing, and not improbably circulated his works with discretion. He certainly maintained his incognito as long as he could, and he no less certainly relied on the staunchness of his powerful friends; yet, multiply as we may the explanations of his remarkable immunity, we come back to the one strong reason after all. His bitterness was concealed and made palatable by his coarseness, and that coarseness was his best protector.

Of course our satirist had his enemies and his persecutors. In the monastery, above all, he had to run the gauntlet of the hatred and petty persecutions always reserved for a monk who dared to divest himself of the detestable monkish jargon which they called Latin. He and his friend Pierre Lamy were more than once subjected to annoyance, and even to personal discipline of no trifling sort, for the persistence of their attachment to the newfangled studies. The learned

Budé conceived a great friendship for the ingenuous young monks who thus bravely followed his exhortations, and it is said that a regular correspondence was kept up between them. The troubles of Rabelais amongst his fellow-monastics no doubt influenced him in passing from one order to another, and in finally quitting the cloister altogether. It would have been utterly impossible that he should have wholly escaped persecution, but he did escape it in its worst forms, owing to more than one powerful patron his deliverance from more than one imminent danger. Amongst his friends was Geoffroy d'Estissac, bishop of Maillezais, who made him a canon of his abbey, and André Tiraqueau, one of the earliest "teetotallers," "that good, learned, wise, humane, and just civilian," as Rabelais styles him.[1] But even these protectors, coupled with his own discretion, were not sufficient to hold him safe against the fury of the ecclesiastics of the Sorbonne. *Gargantua* was published in 1533, but only an outline of what it afterwards became. Two years later, Francis the First, then at the height of his reactionary folly, and completely (for the time) under the thumb of the Church, is said to have signed a decree for the suppression of printing.[2] It was a terrible and irresistable storm for all who, like Rabelais, had espoused the vocation of letters and literature, and he fled before it. He went to Rome, where he had been before, and where he had also an influential friend in the person of the Cardinal, Jean du Bellay, whose cousin Joachim was a person of considerable merit—so much so, indeed, that he has earned the title of "the French Ovid." An improved edition of *Gargantua* and the two first books of *Pantagruel* had already been published, when the third book of the last work made its appearance in the year 1545, but with a privilege of the king. The Sor-

[1] *Pantagruel*, Book iv., prologue.

[2] No administrative record contains a mention of this piece of almost incredible infatuation, and it is probable that it was never attempted to be fully carried into effect, for the insuppressible cannot be suppressed.

bonnists and the whole clique of zealots were enraged against the author, and, it must be admitted, not without excuse, for Raminagrobis, one of the characters in this third book, speaks thus of the priests :—

"I have this same very day, which is the last both of May and of me, with a great deal of labour, toil, and difficulty, chased out of my house a rabble of filthy, unclean, and pestilential black beasts, dusk, dun, white, ash-coloured, speckled, whose obtrusive importunity would not permit me to die at my own ease ; for by fraudulent pricklings, harpy-like graspings, waspish stingings, all forged in the shops of I know not what kind of insatiabilities, they called me out of those sweet thoughts wherein I was acquiescing." [1]

Panurge says—

"I dare pawn my credit on it that no Jacobin, Cordelier, Carmelite, Capuchin, Theatin, or Minim will bestow his personal presence at his interment. The wiser they, because he has ordained nothing for them in his last will and testament. The devil take me if I go thither. If he be damned, to his own loss and hindrance be it. Why did he abuse the good religious fathers? Why did he drive them out of his chamber at the very time when he stood in the greatest need of their aid, of their devout prayers, of their holy admonitions? Why did he not by testament leave them at least some crumbs, something to eat . . . to these poor folks, who have nothing but their life in this world?" [2]

[1] *Pantagruel*, iii. ch. xxi. "J'ai ce jourd'hui, qui est le dernier de mai et de moi, hors de ma maison, à grande fatigue et difficulté, chassé un tas de villaines, immundes, et pestilentes bestes noires, guarres, faulves, blanches, cendrées, grivolées, lesquelles laisser ne me voulaient à mon aise mourir, et par fraudulentes poinctures, gruppements harpyaques, importunités freslonniques, toutes forgées en l'officine de ne sçai quelle insatiabilité."

[2] *Pantagruel*, iii. ch. xxiii. "Je gage que par mesme doubte à son enterrement n'assistera jacobin, cordelier, carme, capucin, ne minime. Et eulx sages. Aussi bien ne leur a il rien ordonné par testament. Le diable m'emporte si j'y vai. S'il est damné à son dam. Pourquoi mesdisoit-il des bons pères de religion? Pourquoi les avoit-il chassés hors sa chambre sus, l'heure qu'il avoit plus besoin de leur aide, de leurs dévotes prières, de leurs sainctes admonitions? Pourquoi par testament ne leur ordonnoit-il au moins quelques bribes, quelque bouffage . . . aux pauvres gents, qui n'ont que leur vie en ce monde."

Such unstinting applications of the lash were not likely to be borne with equanimity; and if the wavering king had not stepped forward in defence of the author, his enemies would most likely have burned him.

The characteristic virtues and vices of the Renaissance are conspicuous throughout the works of Rabelais. The intoxication of the newly-revived classical learning, the moral revolution in the Church, the outburst of free thought, free speech, free action, the overcrowding of new ideas, and the dazzling splendour of new facts, all are present in the writings of this genial monk. Hear his pæan of triumph as he casts his mind over the luxuriant richness of the century in which it has pleased God to cast his lot:—

"Now it is that the learned languages are to their pristine purity restored, viz. Greek, without which a man may be ashamed to account himself a scholar, Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldæan, and Latin. Printing likewise is now in use, so elegant and so correct, which has been found out in my time by divine inspiration, as, by a diabolical suggestion on the other side, was the invention of ordnance. All the world is full of learned men, of most learned schoolmasters, and vast libraries; and it appears to me, that neither in Plato's time, nor Cicero's, nor Papinian's, was there ever such conveniency for studying, as we see at this day there is. Nor must any adventurer henceforward come in public, or present himself in company, that has not been pretty well polished in the shop of Minerva. I see robbers, hangmen, adventurers, ostlers, more learned now than the doctors and preachers were in my time. What shall I say? The very women and maidens have aspired to this praise and celestial manna of good learning. Yet so it is, that at the age I am now of, I have been constrained to learn the Greek tongue, which I contemned not like Cato, but had not the leisure in my younger years to attend the study of it. And I take much delight in the reading of Plutarch's Morals, the pleasant Dialogues of Plato, the Monuments of Pausanias, and the Antiquities of Athenæus."[1]

[1] *Pantagruel*, book ii. ch. viii.

No wonder if, in the face of such achievements and such a promise, he raged against the backward-looking ecclesiastics who obstinately remained in their grooves of mediævalism and scholasticism.

The brief examples we have given will suffice to illustrate the style of Rabelais—a style which, as an eminent French critic[1] has remarked, is worthy of a profound study. There can be no doubt that our author prided himself on it; although we incline to the belief that he clung to his archaisms in part for the purpose of concealment, and in order to give his work the appearance of being written for a popular or ignorant audience. At the same time he seems to have designed that his very peculiarities of manner should be a protest against, and a satire of, the pedantic jargon so common in his day, and which he so cordially hated. He has admirably expressed this feeling by the mouth of a priggish young scholar at the "alme inclyte and celebrate academy, which is vocitated Lutetia," and who in answer to Pantagruel's question how they spend their time, replies: "We transfretate the Sequane at the dilucul and crepuscul: we deambulate by the compites and quadrives of the urb; we despumate the Latin verbocination; and, like verysimilary amorabons, we captat the benevolence of the omnijugal, omniform, and omnigenal fœminine sex. . . . Then do we cauposinate in the meritory taberns of the Pineapple, the Castle, the Magdalene, and the Mule, goodly vervecine spatules perforaminated with petrocile."[2]

Rabelais' learning, his sound judgment on all questions of education, his zeal for the methods and theories which had commended themselves to his mind, are, next to his wit and raillery, the most prominent features of his work. In the training of the young Gargantua he has the same opportunity which J. J. Rousseau made for himself in *Emile;* and he uses it

[1] Sainte Beuve.

[2] *Pantagruel*, book ii. ch. vi.

effectively. In his admirable chapters on the education of Gargantua, he unfolds to us his own simple and rational plans for the development of a human being from the uncorrupted elements of humanity. The mind and the body are cultivated side by side, without preference, check, or forcing; the faculties and instincts of the child and the youth are allowed free play; the moral and physical qualities are expanded by a healthy and well-directed exercise. No hour of the day was sacrificed to idleness; for no hour of the day was without its due provision of recreation, of relaxation, or of appointed study. The weakness of Rousseau's system—for it is impossible to give to the whole of his well-considered plan of education the assent and commendation due to the greater portion of it—is that he would leave too much to the chapter of accidents during the earlier years of childhood, forbidding any attempt to mould or train the mind until a certain age has been attained. Rabelais has not thus delayed the application of his rules and methods. Read the account which he gives of one day's occupations, and say whether this liberal-minded monk of the sixteenth century had not worthily and wisely addressed himself to the elaboration of his system.

Gargantua[1] awaked then about four o'clock in the morning. Whilst they were rubbing of him, there was read unto him some chapter of the Holy Scripture aloud and clearly. . . . According to the purpose and argument of that lesson, he oftentimes set himself to worship, adore, pray, and send up his supplications to that good God, whose word did show his majesty and marvellous judgment. . . . This done he was apparelled, combed, curled, trimmed, and perfumed, during which time they repeated to him the lessons of the day before. He himself said them by heart, and upon this would ground some practical cases concerning the estate of man. . . . Then for three good hours he had a lecture read unto him. This done they went forth, still confer-

[1] *Gargantua*, book i. ch. xxiii.

ring of the substance of the lecture, either to a tennis-court, or thereabout, where they played at the ball, the long-tennis, and at the pile trigone, most gallantly exercising their bodies, as formerly they had done their minds. . . . Then . . . walking soberly, went to see if dinner was ready. . . . At the beginning of the meal, there was read some pleasant history of the warlike actions of former times, until he had taken a glass of wine. Then, if they thought good, they continued reading, or began to discourse merrily together . . . of all that was served at that table. . . . Afterwards they conferred of the lessons read in the morning . . . He washed his hands and eyes with fair fresh water, and gave thanks unto God in some fine canticks, made in praise of the divine bounty and munificence. This done, they brought in cards, not to play, but to learn a thousand pretty tricks, and new inventions, which were all grounded upon arithmetic. . . . After this they recreated themselves with singing musically . . . then betook himself to his principal study for three hours together, or more, as well as repeat his matutinal lectures, as to proceed in the book wherein he was, as also to write handsomely, to draw and form the antique and Roman letters. This being done, they went out of their house, and with them a young gentleman of Touraine, named the Esquire Gymnast, who taught him the art of riding. Changing then his clothes, he rode a Naples courser, Dutch roussin, a Spanish jennet, a barbed or trapped steed, then a light fleet horse, unto whom he gave a hundred carieres. . . . There he . . . with a sharp, stiff, strong, and well-steeled lance, would he usually force up a door, pierce a harness, beat down a tree, carry away the ring, lift up a cuirassier saddle, with the mail-coat and gauntlet. All this he did in complete arms from head to foot. . . . Another day he exercised the battle-axe . . . then tossed he the pike, played with the two-handed sword, with the back-sword. . . . He wrestled, ran, jumped . . . he did swim in deep waters . . . dragging along his cloak with his teeth . . . then with the help of one hand he entered forcibly into a boat . . . governed it, led it swiftly or slowly with the stream and against the stream. . . . Coming out of the water, he ran furiously up against a hill . . . climbed up trees. . . . The time being thus bestowed, and himself rubbed, cleansed, wiped, and refreshed

with other clothes, he returned fair and softly. . . . Being come to their lodging, whilst supper was making ready, they repeated certain passages of that which had been read, and then sat down at table . . . the dinner was sober and thrifty. . . . During that repast was continued the lesson read at dinner as long as they thought good: the rest was spent in good discourse, learned and profitable. After that they had given thanks, he set himself to sing vocally, and play upon harmonious instruments, or otherwise passed his time at some pretty sports. . . . On other nights they would go make visits unto learned men, or to such as had been travellers in strange and remote countries. When it was full night, before they retired themselves, they went unto the most open place of the house to see the face of the sky, and there beheld the comets, if any were. . . . Then with his master did he briefly recapitulate, after the manner of the Pythagoreans, that which he had read, seen, learned, done, and understood in the whole course of that day. Then prayed they unto God the Creator . . . and, giving thanks unto him for the time that was past, they recommended themselves to his divine clemency for the future. . . . Which being done, they went to bed, and betook themselves to their repose and rest."

Have we much improved, since Rabelais' time, upon his system of education?

In philosophy Rabelais was a Platonist; rather, perhaps, a disciple at first hand of Socrates, for whom he had an immense appreciation, and whom he frankly confesses to be his model. In the prologue to *Gargantua* he justifies his own work by reference to this great exemplar; and the passage must not be overlooked by such as would comprehend the spirit of one who was, to tell the truth, the Socrates of the French Renaissance: "To have eyed his (Socrates') outside, and esteemed of him by his exterior appearance, you would not have given the beard of an onion for him, so deformed he was in body, and ridiculous in his gesture . . . always laughing, tippling, and merry, carousing with every one, with continual gibes and jeers, the better by those means to conceal

his divine knowledge. Now, opening this box, you would have found within it a heavenly and estimable drug, a more than human understanding, an admirable virtue, matchless learning, invincible courage, inimitable sobriety, certain contentment of mind, perfect assurance, and an incredible regard of all that for which men commonly do so much watch, run, sail, fight, travel, toil, and turmoil themselves." He then goes on to say that some "jolly fools of ease and leisure" may think that there is nothing in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* "but jests, mockeries, lascivious discourse, and recreative lies;" but open the book and "you shall find that it containeth things of far higher value than the box did promise; that is to say, that the subject thereof is not so foolish, as by the title at the first sight it would appear to be."

Undoubtedly Rabelais was justified in his comparison. Between Greek and Gallic mockery, raillery, buffoonery, there is a distinction and a difference; yet if Socrates evolved the philosophy of the first, Rabelais was his counterpart, under other circumstances and conditions, in the last. There are indeed many points of resemblance between the two men; and if Socrates had been made known to us by his own pen, or if Rabelais had been given to posterity by one of the staidest of his disciples, the likeness might have been incalculably closer. All due allowance made for the diverse manners and habits of their respective epochs, it would be easy to draw a very striking parallel between the old man who so shrewdly, and with so much dry humour, catechised his friends and pupils in the streets and courtyards of Athens, and the wise yet light-hearted French ecclesiastic who gibed and mocked at his audience, present to him only by anticipation, from the cells of his cloister or the retirement of his vicarage. Both knew the priceless value of the ideas which teemed in their own minds, yet neither held it a sacred duty to penetrate himself with a sense of his own dignity, to pro-

claim himself to his fellow-creatures as an oracle or a priest, to impress himself upon posterity as a man worthy of supreme honour and respect. In nothing were they more alike than this, that, for the very philosophy that was in them, they trampled on the respect which their fellow-men might be disposed to pay them. "If you respect me," they would give us to understand, with a coarse joke, a self-debasing gesture, or a ridiculous grin, "you respect my wisdom through me—that is to say, you treat it with disrespect. What I teach you is wise; what I am is a buffoon;—discriminate!" And posterity has understood them, even more fully than their actual disciples.

Socrates was hated and hunted to death by rival philosophers. If Rabelais escaped the full rage of his enemies, can we wonder that they at least pursued him with their hostility to the end? He had mocked not merely the owls and bats of his age, not merely the wolves and vultures and furred law-cats[1] who preyed on the innocent, but also the peacocks and popinjays of the new culture. The "Limousin who counterfeited the French tongue," who reveres "the olympicols," "who doth highly Pindarize," was none the less laughable in his parade of style and learning than the Sorbonne and the judges were hateful in their oppression. And this same Limousin—we cannot doubt it—was one of the earliest of French *précieux*, a member of the Pléiade, a disciple of Ronsard, perhaps the great man himself. Rabelais has no patience with "these fools" who set themselves to forge a "diabolic tongue:" "Thou flayest the Latin . . . I will teach thee to speak," he cries. But his raillery against the popinjays is kindness itself compared to the bitter gibes which he levels against the veritable enemies of humanity. How he hates "the *procultoux*, and the *chicanoux*, the gentry hidden in

[1] *Chats fourrés*, so called, because the judges of the court established to try the Protestants wore furred gowns.

hair, sheriffs and attorneys, who earn their living in a passing strange way, differing by the whole width of heaven from the dwellers of Rome. At Rome men without number get their bread by poisoning, fighting, slaying; the *chicanoux* get it by being beaten." And what a revenge he can take upon those for whom he has no mercy; as, for instance, on the murderers of his friend Etienne Dolet, the harsh and pitiless judges who are only too eager to fulfil the cruel behests of Church, Parliaments, or Sorbonne. Listen to his description of the Furred Law-cats, who sell their justice to the highest bidder, and feed like vampires on the blood of their fellow-men:—

"The Furred Law-cats are most terrible and dreadful monsters, that devour little children, and feed on marble tables. . . . The hair of their hides does not lie outwards; and every mother's son of them for his device wears a gaping pouch, but not all in the same manner. . . . They have claws so very strong, long, and sharp, that nothing can get from them what is once fast between their clutches. . . . As we entered their den, said a common mumper, to whom we had given half a teston, Worshipful culprits, God send you a good deliverance. Examine well, said he, the countenance of these stout props and pillars of this catch-coin law and iniquity; and pray observe, that if you still live but six olympiads, and the age of two dogs more, you will see these Furred Law-cats lords of all Europe, and in peaceful possession of all the estates and dominions belonging to it. . . . Among them reigns the sixth essence; by the means of which they gripe all, devour all . . . burn all, draw all, hang all, quarter all, behead all, murder all, imprison all, waste all, and ruin all, without the least notice of right or wrong: for among them vice is called virtue; wickedness, piety; treason, loyalty; robbery, justice. Plunder is their motto, and, when acted by them, is approved by all men, except the heretics: and all this they do, because they dare; their authority is sovereign and irrefragable. . . . If ever plague, famine, war, fire, earthquakes, inundations, or other judgments befall the world, do not attribute them to the aspects and conjunctions of the malevolent planets. to the abuses of the court of Romania, or the tyranny of

secular kings and princes; to the impostures of the false zealots of the cowl, heretical bigots, false prophets, and broachers of sects; to the villany of griping usurers, clippers, and coiners; nor to the ignorance, impudence, and imprudence of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries . . . but charge them all, wholly and solely, to the inexpressible, incredible, and inestimable wickedness and ruin, which is continually hatched, brewed, and practised in the den or shop of those Furred Law-cats." [1]

We may safely admit that Swift, when writing *Gulliver*, was not unacquainted with Rabelais.

The spirit of the age, whereof Rabelais was the great exponent, the mental and moral intoxication produced by a sudden access of intellectual light too brilliant to be borne with composure by men so long accustomed to live in the twilight, was destined indeed to be often obscured, but never again extinguished. The stream of free thought and free inquiry, which in the Middle Ages had been dammed up until it burst the dykes on either side, and inundated the whole field of human intelligence in western Europe, passed downwards from year to year, and from generation to generation; dividing itself, in France at least, into two minor streams. The division was manifest even in the mind of Rabelais; it grew still more distinct amongst his immediate and later successors. The satire of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* was, as we have seen, twofold in its character, representing the twofold cause of the French national spirit in the pursuit of its vocation. On the one hand we have the broad and liberal current of enlightened scepticism, making use of a more or less refined mockery, a more or less caustic and bitter wit, displaying itself in the virile invectives of Henri Estienne, the classical hypercriticisms of Pasquier, the elegant and shrewd discursiveness of Pascal and Montaigne. On the other hand we find the vagrant humour and trivial facetious-

[1] *Pantagruel*, book v. ch. xi.

ness of the buffoon, the coarse license of the mountebank and the clown, hitting their mark no less surely, and hardly less effectively, though the objects at which they aim are less difficult of reach. In this class of the imitators of Rabelais occur the names of men like Noël du Faïl,[1] an eager relater of old Greek, Italian, and French stories of the broader kind, with little spirit save in the appreciation of his originals; Béroalde de Verville,[2] whose *Moyen de Parvenir* has more of the salt of genuine satire—so much so as to earn for him great praise of competent critics;[3] and a host of lesser lights, all of whom shine with more or less distinct reflection of the great luminary of their age. Rabelais is, in fact, the centre of a new system in the literary heavens; though, it would be superfluous to say, he is not himself the original source of the prevailing satire of the sixteenth century. Rather call him the focus of the converging rays which he was destined to gather up and direct, through a new medium, upon the successive ages of posterity; the creature of his past who was to assist in the creation of his future. Best-endowed child of the early Renaissance, he was the ablest and most influential teacher of his age, because he was the grandest product of that revived spirit of French satirical philosophy which had already given to the world the author of *Pathelin*, and which was yet to evolve the author of *Tartuffe*.

[1] Died about 1585. [2] 1558-1612.

[3] M. Paul Lacroix says in his edition of this author: "Le génie de Rabelais éclate à chaque instant dans ce livre, auquel il ne manque que son nom."

CHAPTER III.

§ 1. MONTAIGNE AND THE MORALISTS.

"I MAKE no doubt that I speak often of matters that were better treated by masters of a speciality, and with greater genuineness. For here you have merely the efforts of my natural faculties, not in any sense of acquired ones; and whosoever may convict me of ignorance will prove nothing against me, for I would scarcely answer for any one of my discourses, who do not answer for myself, nor am content with myself. Let him who seeks for science angle for it where it dwells; there is naught whereof I make less profession. Here are my fancies by which I aim to give knowledge, not of things but of myself; these, it may hap, will be known to me hereafter, or have been known to me heretofore, just as chance may have taken me where they have stood revealed; but I remember them no more, and if I am a man of some reading, I am a man of no recollection; thus I guarantee nothing for certain, except it be to make known how far, for the present hour, extends the knowledge which I have thereof. Let none have regard to the subjects, but to the fashion which I give them; let him see, whatever I may borrow, if I have known fitly how to heighten or to aid the discovery, which comes always from myself; for I cause others—not my mind but my companions—to say that which I cannot say so well, for the weakness of my language or the weakness of my sense. I do not count my borrowings, I weigh them, and if I had wished to make them valuable by their number, I should have furnished myself with twice as many. . . . Herein,[1]

[1] Montaigne, *Essays*, bk. ii., ch. x. "Je ne fois point de doubte qu'il ne m'advienne souvent de parler de choses qui sont mieulx traictées chez les maistres du metier, et plus veritablement. C'est icy purement l'essay de mes

reader, you have a book of good faith. It warns you from the outset that I have proposed to myself no other end than a domestic and private one: I have had in it no consideration of your service nor of my glory; my powers are not equal to so great a design. . . . My faults shall be clearly read therein, my imperfections and my candid form, in so far as public reverence has permitted me."[1]

It is Montaigne[2] who speaks; and in these few words you have an epitome of the man and of his writings. It may be, as one of his critics says,[3] that a man of his wide reading cannot fail to impart a knowledge of things—cannot avoid giving us science as well as fancies. But Montaigne knew himself better than his critic knew him, and what he says of himself is true. One would scarcely undertake to acquit him of false modesty, or of self-conscious humility; but the fact remains that the author of the unique *Essais*, which have not

facultez naturelles, et nullement des acquises: et qui me surprendra d'ignorance, il ne fera rien contre moy; car à peine respondroy ie à aultruy de mes discours, qui ne m'en responds point à moy, n'y n'en suis satisfaict. Qui sera en cherche de science, si la pesche où elle se loge: il n'est rien dequoy ie face moins de profession. Ce sont icy mes fantasies, par lesquelles ie ne tasche point de donner à cognoistre les choses mais moy: elles me seront à l'adventure cogneues un iour, on l'ont aultrefois esté, selon que la fortune m'a peu porter sur les lieux où elles estoient esclaircies; mais il ne m'en souvient plus; et si ie suis homme de quelque leçon, ie suis homme de nulle retention: ainsi je ne pleuvis aulcune certitude, si ce n'est de faire cognoistre iusques à quel poinct monte, pour cette heure, la cognoissance que i'en ay. Qu'on ne s'attende pas aux matières, mais à la façon qui i'y donne: qu'on veoye, en ce que i'emprunte, si i'ay sceu choisir de quoy rehaulser ou secourir proprement l'invention, qui vient tousiours de moy; car ie fois dire aux aultres, non à ma teste, mais à ma suitte, ce que ie ne puis si bien dire, par foiblesse de mon langage, ou par foiblesse de mon sens. Ie ne compte pas mes emprunts, ie les poise; et si ie les eusse voulu faire valoir par nombre, ie m'en feusse chargé deux fois autant."

[1] Montaigne, *Essays*, Preface to bk. i. "C'est icy un livre de bonne foy, lecteur. Il t'advertit dez l'entrée, que ie ne m'y suis proposé aulcune fin, que domestique et privee: ie n'y ai eu nulle consideration de ton service, ny de ma gloire; mes forces ne sont pas capables d'un tel dessein. . . . Mes defaults s'y liront au vif, mes imperfections et ma forme naïfve, autant que la reverence publicque me l'a permis." [2] 1533-1592. [3] Servan.

forfeited their popularity through so many ages, was before all things a literary *flâneur;* a gossip and not a teacher; superficial rather than profound. A deep thinker he hardly deserves to be called;[1] for his shrewdness of expression was more a natural turn of thought than an acquisition. As a boy, we cannot doubt it, Montaigne was quaint and acute, to the occasional discomfiture of his father and his schoolmasters; as a man he had precisely those qualities which make a capital after-dinner talker, which give country gentlemen pre-eminence in the justice-room and the council-chamber, which gain for their possessors a respect not unmixed with fear from their less ready-witted and quick-tongued associates. The dry humour, the satire, the homely common-sense of this aristocrat of the sixteenth century were not by any means invariably kind and conciliatory. There was a trace of bitterness in the mind which, rebelling so stoutly against the pedantry and formalism of its class, rebelled quite as strongly against the prevailing excitability of its age. Montaigne stood midway between the doctors who grudged the new light of the masses and the extravagant rebels against authority who set no bounds to their trenchant satire. From the height of an unconfessed philosophy, and the breadth of an unconfessed store of experience, he despised both the one and the other; and it is difficult to say which of the two feelings he has contrived most successfully to conceal. No doubt the bent of his mind led him to sympathise more with the satirical school whereof Rabelais was the great leader and exponent; yet in the didactic form of his style he approaches rather to the fashion of the scholastics. Take, for example, the essay on Democritus and Heraclitus, than which the sixteenth century affords little, in the vulgar tongue, more correctly and severely critical:—

[1] Villemain, *Essai sur Montaigne.*

"Democritus and Heraclitus were two philosophers, of whom the first, finding man's estate ridiculous and vain, never appeared abroad but with a jeering and laughing countenance. Whereas Heraclitus, commiserating this condition of ours, appeared always with a sorrowful look and tears in his eyes.

> 'One always, when he o'er his threshold stept,
> Laugh'd at the world; the other always wept.'

I am clearly for the first humour; not because it is more pleasant to laugh than to weep, but because it is more scornful, and condemns us more than the other. I think we can never be sufficiently despised to our desert. Compassion and bewailing seem to imply some esteem for the thing bemoaned; whereas the things we laugh at we judge of no value. I do not think that we are so unhappy as we are vain, nor so malicious as silly; so mischievous as trifling, nor so miserable as we are vile. Therefore Diogenes, who passed away his time in rolling himself in his tub, and sniffed up his nose at the great Alexander, esteeming us flies or bladders puffed up with wind, was a more penetrating judge, and consequently more to my taste than Timon, surnamed the man-hater; for what a man hates he lays to heart. This last was an enemy to all mankind, did passionately wish our ruin, and avoided our conversation, as dangerous, wicked, and of depraved nature. The other valued us so little that we could neither trouble nor infect him by our contagion, and left us to herd with one another, not out of fear, but from contempt of our society, concluding us as incapable of doing good as ill."[1]

In fact, Montaigne represents, if he did not inaugurate,

[1] *Essais*, bk. i. ch. L. "Democritus et Heraclitus ont esté deux philosophes, desquels le premier trouvant vaine et ridicule l'humaine condition, ne sortoit en publicque qu'avecques un visage mocqueur et riant; Heraclitus, ayant pitié et compassion de cette mesme condition nostre, en portoit le visage continuellement triste, et les yeulx chargez de larmes:

> 'Alter
> Ridebat, quoties a limine moverat unum
> Protuleratque pedem; flebat contrarius alter.'[2]

I'ayme mieulx la premiere humeur; non parce qu'il est plus plaisant de rire que de plorer, mais parce qu'elle est plus desdaigneuse, et qu'elle nous condemne plus que l'aultre; et il me semble que nous ne pouvons iamais estre assez mes-

[2] Juvenal, Sat. X. 28.

the school of French satirists which, standing as it were between Calvin and Rabelais, avoided both the coarseness and abandon of the latter, and the ascetic sternness and awkward pleasantries of the former. The whole character of the man —nay, the whole character of the satirical Frenchman of whom he was the antetype—is expressed in the portrait which lies before us as we write. He is represented in his robes as Mayor of Bordeaux. One might take him, at the first glance, for a French Shakespeare, in gown, fur tippet, and ruffle; with a loose, low-crowned hat to hide the absence of the bump of veneration. But a closer attention soon reveals the difference. The forehead is high; but it lacks both the breadth and the fulness which strike us in the English poet. Perspicacity is here, and clearness, and power of concentration; but little imagination and less constructiveness. The eyes are small, but they denote shrewdness and reflection; whilst perhaps the most noticeable feature of all is the sneer which forces itself into prominence beneath the short moustache. It is the face of a man whose literary breadth might be infinitely superior to his moral breadth; whose judgment in matters of taste and whose catholicity in matters of criticism might far outweigh the firmness and independence of his character; who,

prisez selon nostre merite. La plaincte et la commiseration sont meslees a quelque estimation de la chose qu'on plainct: les choses dequoy on se mocque, on les estime sans prix. Ie ne pense point qu'il y ayt tant de malheur en nous, comme il y a de vanité; ny tant de malice, comme de sottise: nous ne sommes pas si pleins de mal, comme d'inanité; nous ne sommes pas si miserables, comme nous sommes vils. Ainsi Diogenes, qui baguenandoit à part soy, roulant son tonneau, et hochant du nez le grand Alexandre, nous estimant des mouches, ou des vessies pleines de vent, estoit bien iuge plus aigre et plus poignant, et par consequent plus iuste à mon humeur que Timon, celuy qui feut surnommé le Haïsseur des hommes; car ce qu'on hait, on le prend à coeur. Cettuy cy nous souhaittoit du mal, estoit passionné du desir de nostre ruine, fuyoit nostre conversation comme dangereuse, de meschants et de nature despravee: l'aultre nous estimoit si peu, que nous ne pourrions ny le troubler ny l'alterer par nostre contagion; nous laissoit de compaignie, non pour la crainte, mais pour le desdaing, de nostre commerce; il ne nous estimoit capables ny de bien ny de mal faire."

at his desk, might be relied upon for coolness, courage, and discrimination, but in whom it might not be safe to trust if your interests were opposed to the feelings of his order and the expressed wishes of his superiors. If he had lived at the present time, he would have been returned to the Senate as a supporter of Marshal Macmahon, backed by the whole influence of a Conservative prefect, and aided by hundreds of Republican votes.

But he was born in the thirty-third year of the sixteenth century. He received a sound education, learning, from his earliest youth, to speak Latin, and being awakened every morning by the sound of music. He went to study the law at Toulouse, Bordeaux, and Paris, became a magistrate, a member of the Parliament of Bordeaux—a place which he soon resigned,—knight of the order of Saint-Michel, gentleman of the chamber of the king, and, later, of the Queen of Navarre. He retired at last to his castle of Montaigne, in the Périgord, where he composed his *Essais*—the first edition of which appeared in 1580—travelled for about a year and a half in Switzerland, Italy, and the Tyrol, was elected mayor of Bordeaux for three consecutive years, went to Paris, visited the assembly of the States General at Blois, and died about eighteen months before Henri IV. was crowned, an event which he had so ardently wished to see. Of his six daughters only one survived him.

To turn from an author to his works, from the man as we see him in his actions to the man as he betrays himself in his writings, is not always a pleasure. It has happened in a hundred notable instances that a great and worthy man, writing in some less elevated mood, upon a subject or in a style unsuited to his particular faculties, leaves behind him an imperishable reproach upon himself, or at least a blot which those who love him would gladly, if it were possible, expunge. Worst of all is the case of those who, having once

vindicated their claim to be enrolled amongst the literary creators whom the world delights to honour, live to dim the splendour of their reputation by the license of passion or the reactionary weakness of old age. Milton, forgetting both dignity and refinement in his controversies with Salmasius; Villon, suffering himself at the close of life to speak slightingly of the offspring of his adult genius;—we need not accumulate the illustrations of so distasteful a phenomenon. The converse truth is infinitely more refreshing to contemplate; and in Montaigne we have an author to whose works we can turn, as the world has ever turned, with undiluted satisfaction; and, if it must be confessed, with a sigh of relief upon passing from the man to his writings. There is no need to exaggerate the significance of those less pleasing episodes in the life of Montaigne which recent researches have brought to the light of day. On the other hand, it would be an injustice to his memory not to point out that these are at the worst but isolated facts—contradictions, it may well be, in the character of a wise and prudent man. Whereas there are no such inconsistencies to lament in the fruits of Montaigne's genius, such as we find them displayed in his sparkling and philosophical *Essays;* and it is by these, rather than by the meagre facts of his life, that we must decide upon his due position in our literary record—by these that we have a right to determine the place which he shall hold in our esteem.

If in Montaigne we can perceive the influence of, or, at the very least, a natural succession to Rabelais, illustrated by the higher, more delicate and refined mood of satire, yet at the same time Montaigne was himself the leader of a school, and has left a deep imprint upon the literary fashion of his age. He was a moralist *par excellence*, a metaphysician, who, in style and tone, was the progenitor of Charron, of Vauvenargues, of La Bruyère, of La Rochefoucauld. His reflection, his taste, his critical instinct, his *incuriosité*, to use

a word of his own, and his eclecticism, are conspicuous in every one of his discourses, as they are conspicuous in his disciples. In one respect, perhaps, he is behind his successors; though even here the theoretical shortcoming may be set down by his admirers in the list of his virtues. He is more susceptible than either of those whom we have called his disciples; more impressible, more emotional, more human. Is it a flaw in his ethics—this continual reference to the feelings, to nature, to the vacillating judgment of the heart, which reminds us rather of La Fontaine than of La Rochefoucauld? In England we may consider it so, in our preference for cool argument and phlegmatic "common sense." But Montaigne was a Gaul; not only in the character of his satire, not only in his quick sympathy and indignation, but also in the elasticity of mind which leads him to make pleasure, ease, and gaiety, at once the method and the aim of his morality.

The loftiness, the dynamic power of this morality, cannot surely be said to suffer by the impassioned outbursts which mark the contact of this unconscious preacher's mind with the meanness, the crimes, the miseries of humanity. In the fervour of his declamations he gives us, here and there, a foreshadow of the theoretical socialism of our own day—an antetype of the dignified radicalism of one of his greatest eulogists, Rousseau. Hear him inveigh against the pomp and luxury of kings.

"To the subjects who look on at these triumphs it suggests itself that their own wealth is being displayed before them, and they are being feasted at their own expense. For nations readily assume of their kings, as we of our servants, that they ought to make a duty of setting before us in abundance all that we need, but that they ought by no means to touch it themselves. . . . Generally the people are right, and their eyes are fed upon what was meant to feed their stomachs. . . . To be exact, a king has properly nothing of his own: he owes himself to others."[1]

[1] "Il semble aux sujets spectateurs de ces triomphes qu'on leur fait

Or again :—

"Look there on the ground at the poor fellows whom we see scattered about, their heads weighed down after their labours, who know neither Aristotle nor Cato, nor example nor precept. From them nature draws lessons of constancy and patience, day after day, more pure and correct than those which we study so heedfully at school. How many am I wont to see who make light of poverty! How many who desire death, or who approach it without alarm and without grief."[1]

The master's sympathy was before the mind of the disciple when La Bruyère wrote :[2]—

"We see certain savage beasts, male and female, scattered over the country, black, livid, scorched by the sun, bound to the soil which they trample on, and which they sow with unrestrained obstinacy. They have, as it were, an articulate voice, and when they raise themselves on their feet they show a human face ; and, in fact, they are men. At night they retire to dens, in which they live on black bread, water, and grapes ; they save other men the labour of sowing, toiling, and gathering for subsistence, and deserve thus that they should not lack the bread which they have sown."

The vehement assertion of the claims of social equality had begun in earnest. The literary posterity of the leaders

montre de leurs propres richesses et qu'on les festoie à leurs despnes. Car les peuples présument volontiers des rois, comme nous faisons de nos valets, qu'ils doivent prendre soin de nous apprester en abondance tout ce qu'il nous faut, mais qu'ils n'y doivent aulcunement toucher de leur part . . . tant il y a que le plus souvent le peuple a raison et qu'on repaist ses yeux de ce quoy il avoit à repaistre son ventre. . . . A le prendre exactement, un roi n'a proprement rien sien, il se doit soy-même à autruy."

[1] Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. iii. ch. xii. "Regardons à terre : les pauvres gents que nous y voyeons espandus, la teste penchante après leur besongne, quy ne sçavent ny Aristote ny Caton, ny exemple, ny précepte ; de ceulx là tire nature tous les jours des effets de constance et de patience, plus purs et plus roides que ne sont ceulx que nous estudions si curieusement en l'eschole ; combien en veois je ordinairement qui mescognoissent la pauvreté! combien qui desirent la mort, ou qui la passent sans alarme et sans affliction."

[2] La Bruyère, *Caractères ; de l'Homme.*

of the *bagaudes* inaugurated a new campaign in the sixteenth century, which was to rage still more fiercely after the cruel experiences of the Fronde. And Montaigne, who had raised the standard—Montaigne, the learned recluse, who desired that death might find him "occupied in digging in his garden, and not caring for her;" who could draw wisdom for all ages by simply "looking into his heart and writing," like his chivalrous contemporary Philip Sidney—Montaigne could say "I write my book for few men, and for a few years."[1]

Observe, at the same time, that Montaigne was pre-eminently a man of wise and prudent counsel, sincerely attached to existing institutions, sincerely opposed to popular agitation or rapid changes in the state. A theoretical Radical, in short; impatient of abuse and wrong, firm in his love of order and settled government; with just so much of genuine Conservatism as enabled him to be moderately content with the laws and regulations of his country; satisfied to let things rest, for want of firm belief in the power of any man to improve them. "These long and vast discussions,"[2] he says, "on the best form of society, and the regulations best fitted to unite us together, are discussions suitable only to the exercise of our minds, as in art there are many subjects which have their essence in agitation and dispute, and have no vitality beyond.[3] Such and such a picture of the model of government might be in place in a new world; but we have a world already made and shaped after particular fashions; we do not beget it, like Pyrrha or Cadmus. Whatever method

[1] Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. iii. ch. ix. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] In one point Montaigne seems to have been an agitator and an innovator,—in words. His style is not considered very good, but the following words were first brought in general use by him: *accoutumance*, *diversion*, *enfantillage*, *empaqueté*, *enjoué*, *écrivailleur*, *écrivaillerie*, *se gendarmer*, *inepte*, *incompréhensible*, *indicible*, *inimaginable*, *rapsodie*, and *vagabonder*. He employed a great many more which have not been adopted.

we adopt to reconstitute and arrange it, we can hardly twist it from its wonted form without breaking it altogether."[1] He quotes:

"'Love the state such as you see it:
If it is royal love royalty;
If it is oligarchical or popular,
Love it also; for God caused you to be born there.'[2]

This is what good Monsieur de Pibrac, whom we have just lost, says of it." Pibrac's contemporaries called him pre-eminently gentle, prudent, and amiable, but he was nevertheless a virulent apologist of the St. Bartholomew murders.

Montaigne displayed his catholicity, his balance of mind, his perception of a possible better, and his contentment with the actual good, in matters of religious faith and opinion. He depreciated polemics, and dreaded innovation. For his own part he could go so far as to accept even miracles; reproving the rashness which despises what it cannot comprehend. He has not a word against the monks; he maintains that it is not for a wise man to decide the extent of the obedience which we owe to the ecclesiastical authorities. At most we may wash our hands of such obedience: we may not tamper with it. In religion, it is manifest, Montaigne was a Conservative; and yet he was in fact the prince of sceptics. His chapter on Prayers[3] is couched in language of reverent simplicity; though he tells us that the Lord's Prayer is the only one which he retains in his memory. Reverent, however, as he is, and outwardly in harmony with the

[1] Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. iii. ch. 9.

[2] Gui du Faur, lord of Pibrac, died in 1584. His book was called *Quatrains contenant préceptes et enseignements utiles pour la vie de l'homme:*

"Ayme l'estat tel que tu le veois estre:
S'il est royal, ayme la royauté;
S'il est de peu, ou bien communauté
Ayme l'aussi; car Dieu t'y a faist naistre."

[3] Montaigne, *Essais*, bk. i. ch. 56.

orthodoxy of his day, the very principles of his philosophy declare him a sceptic. The Church would have been more reasonable, from its own point of view, in trying to suppress Montaigne than either Rabelais or Marot. We ask ourselves —it is thus that he reveals his true condition of mind— touching any incomprehensible matter, "How this can be?" and find our answer. It would have been better to ask, "Is it so?" Once satisfied on our own part, "it is a work of charity to persuade others; to which end none is afraid of adding from his own ingenuity as much as he sees necessary to his argument, in order to meet the resistance or the defect which he conceives as existing in the other's mind."

This was, for the sixteenth century, the essence of fine satire and delicate raillery. How different from the knock-down blows of Rabelais; and yet the age demanded both the club and the rapier.

§ 2. Montaigne's Friends and Disciples.

Amongst the intimate friends and disciples of Montaigne, whose companionship brought him the consolation of a literary sympathy, and to one at least of whom he left the legacy of his ardent and well-poised spirit, were La Boëtie, Charron, and several other scholars and philosophers, indefatigable explorers of the past and eager anticipators of the future. La Boëtie[1] was a young man who, even at the age of sixteen, was amongst the first to interpret to the world the portentous fact that its future was, as it were, to grow out of its past— and out of a past which fifteen centuries had buried under their accumulated ruins. He died at the age of thirty-two, nine-and-twenty years before Montaigne, who was his intimate friend, and gave as his reason for being so: "*parce que*

[1] 1530-1563.

c'était lui, parce que c'était moi." The young scholar lived long enough to justify the praises of the friend who has immortalised him, though not long enough, it may be, to show of what lofty flights his spirit was capable. Already at a very youthful age he was one of the councillors of the Parliament of Bordeaux, became there acquainted with Montaigne, and wrote translations of Aristotle, Plutarch, and Xenophon. But his fame rests chiefly on his vivid and eloquent pamphlet *De la Servitude Volontaire*, written in 1546, which circulated for about thirty years in manuscript, without author's name, without title, and without date, and to which the public had given the epigrammatic name *Le Contr'un.*[1] Judge of the noble style and grandeur of thought and language of a boy of sixteen years old, by a single specimen, in which he insists upon the universal love of liberty in all worthy men, and upon the strength which such a feeling inspires in those who possess it :—

"Place on one side fifty thousand armed men, and the same number on the other side ; set them in battle array, and let them meet ; the first free, fighting for their liberty, the others fighting to take this away ; to which would one incline to assure the victory ? Which would one think would advance more lightly to the contest—those who look to the preservation of their liberty as the reward of their labour, or those who can expect nothing from the blows which they give or receive than the slavery of others ? The first have ever before their eyes the good fortune of their past life, the expectation of a similar lot in the future. They remember not so much that which they endure, the brief period during which the battle must continue, as that which it will be their fate for ever to endure—the fate of their children

[1] It has long been stated that La Boëtie, indignant on account of the cruelties which were inflicted by De Montmorency in 1548 upon the inhabitants of Guienne, who had revolted against the salt-tax and other burdensome imposts, had written his *De La Servitude*, but it is now proved that this pamphlet, which is more general in its applications, was written in 1546, two years before the terrible vengeance was inflicted.

and their posterity. The others have nothing to make them brave but a little spice of covetousness, which recoils instantly against danger, which cannot be so ardent as it ought to be, and which seems to flicker out beneath the least drop of blood from their wounds." [1]

Montaigne wrote, after La Boëtie's death, to his (Montaigne's) father: "To make you understand the invincible courage in a body worn out and broken down by the furious efforts of death and pain, I confess that I should require a far better style than my own; for whilst he was yet alive, when he spoke of grave and important matters, he spoke in such a way that it would be difficult to write it well, so that indeed it seemed as though his spirit and his tongue did violence to themselves, as though to render him their last service. For without doubt, I never saw him charged with so many and so fine imaginations, nor with so much eloquence as he was throughout this sickness."

There is no mention of Charron [2] in the *Essays;* and he does not seem to have made Montaigne's acquaintance until the year 1589, three years before the master's death. Perhaps it is as well for his fame that he did not know the author of the *Essays* longer than three years, for, as it is, the excess of his admiration for one so immeasurably greater than himself

[1] "Qu'on mette d'un costé cinquante mille hommes en armes; d'un aultre, autant; qu'on les renge en battaille; qu'ils viennent à se ioindre, les uns libres combattant pour leur franchise, les aultres pour la leur oster; auxquels promettra on par coniecture la victoire? lesquels pensera on qui plus gaillardement iront au combat, ou ceulx qui esperent pour guerdon de leur peine l'entretenement de leur liberté, ou ceulx qui ne peuvent attendre loyer des coups qu'ils donnent ou qu'ils receoivent, que la servitude d'aultruy? Les uns ont tousiours devant leurs yeulx le bonheur de leur vie passee, l'attente de pareil ayse à l'advenir; il ne leur souvient pas tant de ce qu'ils endurent ce peu de temps que dure une battaille, comme de ce qu'il conviendra à iamais endurer à eulx, à leurs enfants et à toute la posterité; les aultres n'ont rien qui les enhardisse, qu'une petite poincte de convoitise qui se rebouche soubdain contre le dangier, et qui ne peult estre si ardente qu'elle ne se doibve et semble esteindre par la moindre goutte de sang qui sorte de leurs playes."

[2] 1541-1603.

has dwarfed his intellect, and made him little else than an imitator. A French critic[1] has not much overstated the case in saying that "there are not many books so devoid of originality as the *Traité de la Sagesse*." The method, the text, the style, the very illustrations and quotations, are Montaigne's; and when Montaigne fails him, he has recourse to Montaigne's library, taking the gist of whole chapters at a time from Seneca, Plutarch, Justus Lipsius, Bodin, or du Vair. Charron is, in fact, rather a decoctor than an author; but he has method. If his powers are almost limited to cooking what other men hunt and kill, he has at least one gift in addition: he knows how to lay the table. And in this he excels; not so much by his general effect as seen from the gallery, but by an occasional grouping of dishes, by an arrangement of the épergnes, which catch the eye of an individual guest. There is some credit in arranging a poor feast like a costly one, and in dressing a rabbit so as to make it look as imposing as a hare.

Charron's indebtedness to Montaigne is manifest in the very subdivision of his subject. The first part of his treatise deals with "The knowledge of one's self, and of the condition of humanity;" the second enumerates the "Instructions and general rules of Wisdom;" the third treats of the "Special aspects of Wisdom in the four moral virtues." From the study of one's self, we find scepticism follows as a matter of course—which Montaigne rather implied than said; though he undoubtedly implied it. Nevertheless, says Charron, there is a God, Christianity is the only true religion, Catholicism is the only true Christianity—and so forth, until we wonder where, in this remarkable system of philosophy, the unavoidable scepticism is to find its place. What with Montaigne was a subtle indecision between, or simultaneous attraction by Christianity and scepticism, becomes in Charron a flat inconsistency. His genius for imitation carried him so far that,

[1] A. Desjardin, *Moralistes Français du XVIe. siècle*, "Charron."

being in fact a better Catholic than his master, he yet contrived to make room in his anatomy of wisdom for a scepticism which he was not wise enough to feel, out of sheer admiration for his teacher. And, this absurdity being not sufficiently glaring, he goes on to construct an elaborate theory based on universal knowledge and belief. Enough, perhaps, of the wisdom of Charron.

Amongst the moralists of the sixteenth century, whereof Montaigne formed the centre and the type, we may reasonably include De Pibrac, who, as we have seen, predeceased the author of the *Essays*. Next to Montaigne himself, perhaps Pibrac had the most wholesome influence on his generation.[1] And, indeed, there are, in these elegant quatrains, a freshness, a cosmopolitan fitness, grace, and common-sense, which remind us forcibly of the essays of the writer's friend. Montaigne said that a man cannot be judged by one or two acts; that his vice or virtue must be perceived in his whole life, of which it has, in fact, been the accumulated effect. Pibrac says—

> "Virtue and morals are not acquired by study,
> Nor by money, nor by favour of kings,
> Nor by one act, nor by two, nor by three,
> But by constancy and long habit."[2]

And again, virtue is said to "be lying between two extremes, to exceed in nothing, and to be wanting in nothing." And of honour he says—

[1] The Abbé Roche, who edited in 1747 the quatrains of several old authors, calls Pibrac "an instructor of the youth of France up to the times of our fathers," that is up to the middle of the seventeenth century. Molière quotes him also in *Sganarelle*.

[2] "Vertu et mœurs ne s'acquiert par l'estude,
Ni par argent, ni par faveur des rois,
Ni par un acte, ou par deux ou par trois,
Ains par constance et par longue habitude."

"Love honour more than your own life,
I mean honour which is consistent with duty,
Which one ought to render, according to human power,
To God, to the King, to the laws, to one's native land." [1]

Did Pibrac think that he was loving honour when he wrote the apology of the St. Bartholomew's Day? And yet he was the moralist of his age, and though he wrote but little, he may not inaptly be compared with the moralist of another age and another country,[2] who, in strains that have the same ring as Pibrac's, writes of Freedom as

"Turning to scorn with lip divine
The falsehood of extremes."

§ 3. Contemporary Lawyers.

About the year 1570 Etienne Pasquier, himself an advocate, wrote to his eldest son Théodore—

"The first recommendation which you shall have upon joining the bar is to arm yourself with two things—good-will and perseverance. I have seen many come to the Palais (de Justice) with a determination to profit by it, but the length of the course of lectures proving a weariness to them, caused them to change their minds and turn their attention to some other end, which done, all the advantage they had reaped ended in smoke. I have seen others frequenting the Palais with much assiduity, but with so cold a disposition that they have, in spite of everything, continued to remain unemployed. . . . Do not anticipate that I shall teach you those masterpieces of oratory which were given us on this subject by the ancient Greeks and Romans—the many modes in which we should vary our eloquence, the method of exciting the

[1] "Ayme l'honneur plus que ta propre vie,
J'entends l'honneur qui consiste au devoir,
Que rendre on doit, selon l'humain pouvoir,
A Dieu, au roi, aux lois, à la patrie."

[2] Tennyson.

passions of those who hear us, the agreeable ending of a period, and an infinity of pretty flourishes wherewith their books and lessons are crammed. The whole artifice which I intend here to give you is to use no artifice. I desire that you should be simply a good man and a true. When I have said this I have said all. . . . The goal of the advocate in his pleading is to persuade the judges, and one is readily led by the mouth of him whom one considers to be a man of standing. On the other hand, acquire a sinister repute, bring forward as many elegancies and feints of rhetoric as you like, you may do more to tickle the ears of those who hear you, but you will persuade them far less, because every one will be on his guard, thanks to the opinion he has of you. Undertake no cause which you do not think good, for it will be vain to think of persuading your judges if you are not first yourself persuaded by your cause. Fight for the truth, and not for victory. . . . For the rest, I do not desire that you should be anything but a good and true man, for I wish that this quality should be armed with a lively force, to overwhelm vice, valorously to support the poor and afflicted, to make a shield of your conscience against the efforts of the strongest, who would abuse their authority and greatness for the ruin of the poorest. Put out of your head that courtiership which I see practised by some, who will not undertake causes against the great for fear of displeasing them. . . . There are two things which you ought carefully to observe: first, to give the least possible dissatisfaction to those who choose you for their advocate; the second, not too rudely to cross your opponents. You should maintain a cheerful manner with your clients, not be abrupt with them, endure their importunities, never losing sight of this consideration, that there is no more acute mental pain than that of those who go to law on their own account; not by any means that I would have you identify your opinions with their passions. If you think you can find honest solutions for their causes, it will not do to overlook them; if not, it is a crime against the Holy Ghost to feed them on vain hopes, plying them with all kinds of devices, more familiar in the court than I could wish, in order to protract the business. These are just so many tricks for the ruin of poor people. By following the course which I describe to you, you

will have a less busy practice, but it will be more substantial and honourable. . . . I would have you avaricious, but with a noble avarice; with a greed for your honour, and not for money." [1]

What a lesson here for younger generations of advocates! What a dignity, an honesty, a grandeur of virtue and conscientiousness, not surpassed by the noblest special pleader of our own day! And also, what a worthy product of the moral renaissance, whereof the triumphs were as great and as notable as those reaped by the renaissance of literature and art. Etienne Pasquier was a preacher, not by profession, not consciously, but because his lofty intellect soared above the little jealousies and bickerings of his day, and because the new light of the sixteenth century, setting in relief, here as elsewhere, the most characteristic aspect of his mind, displayed him to himself and to us as a pre-eminently moral man—a jurisconsult who set the claims of right above the traditions of the courts; who, for his own part, reckoned himself before all things an advocate of just causes, but whom we must

[1] We give the beginning of Pasquier's letter in the original, as a specimen of his style :—"La première recommendation qu'avez, entrant au barreau, sera de vous armer de deux choses : d'une bonne volonté et d'une continuë. J'en ai vu venir au palais avec une déliberation d'y bien faire ; mais la longueur de l'estat se tournant en eux en langueur, leur faisait changer de propos et mettre leurs esprits en autre sujet ; quoy faisant, tout ce qu'ils avaient édifié s'évanouissait en fumée. J'en ai veu d'autres fréquenter le palais avec une longue assiduité, mais d'une volonté si froide, qu'ils sont du tout demeurez en friche. . . . N'attendez point ici que je vous enseigne tous ces masques d'oraison qui nous furent représentés en ce sujet par les anciens Grecs et Romains, en combien de façons il faut diversifier son bien dire, la manière de remuer les passions de ceux qui escoutent, la closture agréable d'une période et une infinité de belles fleurettes dont leurs livres et enseignements sont farcis. Tout l'artifice que j'entends icy vous donner, est de n'user point d'artifice ; je veux que vous soyez prud'homme : quand je dis ce mot, je dis tout. . . . Le but où vise l'advocat par ses plaidoiries est de persuader ses juges ; et on se laisse aisément mener par la bouche de celui que l'on estime homme de bien. Au contraire, soyez en réputation de meschant, apportez tant d'élégances et hypocrisies de rhétorique qu'il vous plaira, vous délecterez davantage les aureilles de ceux qui vous escoutent, mais les persuaderez beaucoup moins, parce que chacun se tiendra sur ses gardes, par l'opinion qu'il aura de vous."

reckon as before all things an advocate of justice. He had caught the spirit of the new birth, and pertains to the future rather than to the past, as truly as either Rabelais or Montaigne ; and if we do not compare him with those two master-minds of the Renaissance, it is because his work and influence belong not to literature so much as to jurisprudence. His genius, moreover, was less brilliant than that of his two great contemporaries, if not less fervid. We will not say that he stands on a lower level than they, but the mark which he has made is less distinct.

Pasquier was a Parisian, born in 1529, before the death of Erasmus, before the birth of Montaigne, before Rabelais had written his *Gargantua*, and his life extended over fifteen years of the subsequent century. He died five years after the massacre of Henri IV., after the death of Desportes, Regnier, and Charron. He had seen the first successes and the last discouragement of Protestantism in France, and had lived through the protracted wars, and so long beyond them that he must have heard statesmen and scholars contending for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It was within the range of possibility that he should have sat at the feet of Machiavelli and held in his arms the infant La Rochefoucauld. Never was there a lifetime which embraced within itself more varied and contrasted periods in the history of a single literature. He studied law first at Toulouse, and passed from there to Mariano Sozzini, a celebrated jurist, at Bologna. Although he had devoted himself to jurisprudence with good will and a persevering spirit, as he advised his son to do in his turn, he was by no means a mere lawyer. As a man of letters, a critic, and a connoisseur, he took part in the intense literary activity of his age. Amongst his remains are a large number of *Letters*, addressed to his sons and the more intimate of his friends, which amply attest the catholicity of his taste and judgment. The most ambitious of his literary efforts was a

volume of *Recherches de la France*, in nine books, a work insufficient, indeed, to earn for its author high rank as a historian, yet very readable. A volume of *Notes and Queries*, another of the *Curiosities of Literature*, a dozen chapters of Selden's *Table-Talk* and Southey's *Commonplace Book*, would not ill represent this heterogeneous, discursive, anecdotical book. Pasquier had an enthusiasm for the history of his country—"ma France," as he delights to put it; and he is nowhere more ardent in expression than when he reviews the intellectual progress of his age.[1] "It was a grand war," he says, "which was undertaken against ignorance;" and the martial view suits him so well that he suffers it to carry him through some score of pages. He recounts the "forerunners" of the great sixteenth century poets.[2] "Then, later on, there joined the ranks Pierre de Ronsard of Vendôme, and Joachim du Bellay of Anjou, both gentlemen of noble birth, who wrote happily, but Ronsard in particular, so that many enrolled themselves under their banners. You might have said that age was entirely consecrated to the Muses. . . . I myself, after this beginning, gave to the world my *Monophile*, which was favourably received." He was more than eighty years of age when he published a trifle called *La Jeunesse de Pasquier*, wherein he laughs gaily over the poetical frailties of his youth.

Enough has been said to indicate the extent of Pasquier's literary scope, which, wide as it was, would have attracted even less attention but for the great elegance and concision of his style. He was unquestionably the purest writer of French prose in the sixteenth century, and his influence upon the language was hardly inferior to that of Malherbe. As a jurisconsult he was formed upon his master, Cujas[3] of Toulouse, a pupil of the celebrated Italian lawyer Andrea Alciati,[4] through

[1] Book vii.
[2] *Recherches de la France*, Book vii. ch. 6.
[3] 1522-1590.
[4] 1492-1550.

whom another channel of influence had been opened between Italy and France. The latter had settled in Bourges, on the invitation of Francis the First; and within a few years he had gathered round him a school of Roman law whose studies were directed upon entirely novel principles and methods, and which substituted in France a new science of jurisprudence for the time-worn traditions of the past fifteen centuries. Cujas himself laboured all his life to classify and explain the fruits of Roman legislation after a scheme never hitherto applied to them. No longer satisfied with the positive code which, from the time of Justinian—not to go farther back—had been accepted as it stood, without reference to the sources of its inspiration, he brought to bear upon it all the light of history, antiquity, scholarship, and scientific research. Every individual law was studied afresh, in connection with the epoch and the special circumstances of its first promulgation. Roman jurisprudence was reconquered by these brave and indefatigable students, who probed laboriously under the accumulated ruins of ages, until they reached once again the vitality and originality of ancient Rome. What Cujas did at Toulouse, and for Roman law, Dumoulin[1] did at Paris for the civil law. These were succeeded in their labours by that famous group of French magistrates who have shed lustre on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Henri de Mesmes,[2] a lawyer and a statesman, describing the studies to which he and his fellow-students of the same school were wont to devote themselves, says: "We were up at four in the morning, and after saying our prayers to God, went at five o'clock to work, with our great books under our arms, our writing-cases and candles in our hands." And Loisel,[3] an intimate friend of Etienne Pasquier, relates how "Pithou (one of the writers of the *Satire Ménippée*), Cujas, and myself used to assemble every evening after supper in the library,

[1] 1500-1566. [2] 1531-1596. [3] 1536-1617.

and there worked until three o'clock in the morning." It was an age of hard labour with these early tillers of the classical soil, who, be it remembered, had none of the stepping-stones and royal roads to learning which, thanks in part to them, the present age possesses.

Loisel, whom we have just mentioned, was a Parliamentary advocate, who divided his mind between the study of the law and the cultivation of classical literature. He has left us a monument of his friend Pasquier in a dialogue which takes the name of the latter for its title,[1] and which is copied from the model of Cicero's *Brutus*. It aims at presenting the type of the French magistracy of that day—the type of the well-born, well-educated men, who, having the means of idleness, chose to make them the means of study and devotion to a lofty duty, and who admitted no rival in their attachment to knowledge except their ardent, ever-present, and ever-confessed love of their country. It was to Loisel that Nicholas Pasquier, the second son of Etienne, wrote a description of his father's deathbed, which is extant to this day, and which is not unworthy to stand as a commentary upon and an illustration of Cicero's philosophic treatise *De Senectute*. Quite in the spirit of Cicero are the sentences which conclude this dignified expression of filial piety. "It is an admirable and honourable issue of life for him who, having lived a long time in health and enjoyment, dies with a sound mind and an undimmed understanding. A fortunate and refined old age is given by God to him alone who is a man of good position."[2]

Nicholas Pasquier,[3] the second son of Etienne Pasquier, "maître des requêtes," in the French courts, has left behind him, in addition to his *Letters*, a treatise on the education of the young, under the title of *Le Gentilhomme*. This work, which exhibits much of the elegance and sus-

[1] *Pasquier, ou Dialogue des Avocats du Parlement de Paris.*
[2] *Lettres de Nicolas Pasquier*, iv. 11.
[3] Born about 1560.

tained loftiness of the noble style on which it was modelled, deserves to be read after the passages in which Rabelais unfolds his educational theories, not merely for its own intrinsic merits, but because it starts from an identical basis in the circumstances and conditions of the age. But it is in his *Letters* that we must look for the intellectual measure of Nicholas Pasquier—and, as a consequence, of his time. The spirit of Roman philosophy, caught and assimilated by Frenchmen of the sixteenth century, was cherished and acted up to amidst the political and religious turmoils of the reigns of Francis the First, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Fourth. This is what we find in the letters and memoirs, the essays and narratives of the Pasquiers and their contemporaries. It is a modern Pliny who writes such words as these which follow; and it is a state of things not unlike that existing in Pliny's time which called them forth.

"How shall we judge those criminals of the so-called reformed religion, with a view of punishing them—those who think they are doing right in holding to the opinion which was impressed upon their minds in early youth, which they believe to be the pure truth? For what more certain argument could there be to show that they believe it, than that they die obstinate in their belief? It would indeed be a very elastic conscience which could condemn them for a religion which they hold to be the true faith."[1]

And again, with a remarkable independence and impartiality of judgment:—

"Christianity is an accident of humanity; consequently it is

[1] *Lettres de Nicolas Pasquier*, book ix. letter 11. "Comment jugerait-on ceux de la religion prétendue réformée criminels pour les punir, eux qui pensent bien faire en tenant l'opinion qui leur a esté imprimée en l'esprit dès leur basse jeunesse, laquelle ils croyent estre la pure vérité? Car quel argument plus certain pour monstrer qu'ils le croyent, sinon qu'ils meurent obstinés en cette créance? Ce serait donc conscience bien grande de les condamner pour une religion qu'ils tiennent la vraye foy.

necessary that it should secure the credence which is attained by persuasion, not by force or constraint; and this persuasion comes by the grace of God. . . . If then faith is implanted not by constraint, but voluntarily and of good accord, is it reasonable to punish him who cannot be persuaded that the thing preached to him is true religion? When our Saviour Jesus Christ charges his apostles and disciples to declare the Gospel, he does not command them to force or constrain any man. There is no credit in doing a thing by force. Opinion is free; and however we may force a a man to do a thing against his will, we can never force him to believe that which he does not believe."[1]

In this enthusiastic rebellion against the worn-out scholasticism of the Middle Ages, whereof the lawyers were the great leaders and champions, few of the common and natural illustrations of every-day life were permitted to escape the notice of these ingenious philosophers, who encroached upon the storehouse of the future as well as of the past. In a letter to a country gentleman of Anjou, M. de Réau, who had possibly supplied him, by act or by question, with a theme for his ingenuity, Nicholas Pasquier takes it in hand to consider the morality of the duel; as J. J. Rousseau and many more have done in later days. He describes a combat of three against three, and supplements the catastrophe with a few words which fairly claim to be transferred from his pages to our own. He says—

"Consider how all these gentlemen go to the combat with

[1] "Le christianisme est un accident à l'homme, conséquemment il est besoin qu'il reçoive la foy laquelle se reçoit par la persuasion, non par force ou contrainte, et cette persuasion vient de la grâce de Dieu. . . . Donc si la foy ne se plante point par contrainte, mais volontairement et de plein gré, est-il raisonnable de punir celuy qui ne se peut persuader que ce que l'on lui presche soit la vraye religion? Quand Nostre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ charge ses apostres et disciples d'annoncer l'Evangile, il ne leur commande point de forcer ou contraindre personne. Il n'y a point de mérite à faire une chose par force. L'opinion est libre, et combien que l'on puisse forcer un homme de faire chose contre sa volonté, toutefois il n'est pas possible de le contraindre de croire ce qu'il ne croit pas."

cool patience, and to death with a savage heat. What fury, what rage, that this unbridled passion for a hand-to-hand contest, on account of a false and wretched point of honour, cannot be dissipated by fear of penalties nor by the hazard of life! Even the certain loss of their peace of soul cannot move these gentlemen from such a furious madness; it seems as though they had an antipathy to life; for they rush headlong into the perils of death, appealing from the judgment of the king's laws to the points of their swords. Their natural valour degenerates into a hateful brutality. That which they call honour is no honour, and that which they call courage is no courage. For my part, I think there is in these combats more of ambition, concealed by the hypocrisy of the sword, than of valour. Valour, strictly speaking, is the clear stamp of a judicious mind, equal and uniform throughout, which calmly recognises dangers without being troubled, and despises or surmounts them for some brave purpose, worthy the service of king or country."[1]

Others of the same brilliant group of magistrates, the fruits of whose scant leisure prove how much literature might have gained at their hands in happier times, were Robert Garnier, a dramatist, of whom we shall have further occasion to speak; Vauquelin de la Fresnaye,[2] a poet and satirist, to whom Boileau was indebted for part of his inspiration; Du Vair,[3] author of a *Traité de l'Eloquence française;* Michel de l'Hôpital, who deserved, as much as any of his contemporaries, the praise which Montaigne bestowed upon the cultivated public men of the sixteenth century.[4] He was a native of Auvergne and

[1] We only give the beginning of N. Pasquier's original.

"Considérez comment tous ces gentilshommes vont et avec une froide patience au combat, et avec une aspre chaleur à la mort. Quelle furie, quelle rage de dire que cette desbordée passion de combattre un à un, pour ce faux et malheureux point d'honneur, ne se puisse perdre par la terreur des peines, ni par les hazards de la vie! La privation mesme certaine du salut de l'âme ne peut desmouvoir les gentils hommes d'une phrénésie si enragée; il semble qu'ils aient leur vie à contre-coeur; car ils courent à bride abattue aux périls de la mort, appelant du jugement des édicts du roy à la pointe de leurs épées pour s'appointer.

[2] 1536-1607.

[3] 1556-1621.

[4] Belles âmes frappées à l'antique marque.

passed his youth in exile, studying law under the great Italian professors at Padua, Bologna, and Rome. Returning to France, under the protection of the Cardinal de Grammont, with the prestige of a high reputation for scholarship and legal knowledge, he became successively a distinguished advocate, judge, and diplomatist; and was finally, in 1560, promoted to the dignity of the Chancellorship. De l'Hôpital was no mere lawyer or statesman, successful by force of circumstances, and honoured for his success. He attained the highest position amongst that galaxy of learned and dignified servants of the state, of whom it has been said[1] that "France has produced nothing on which she ought to pride herself more highly than on this ancient magistrature, which, even under an absolute régime, preserved the image of liberty in the independence of justice." He did his best to guide the vessel of the state through the dangers and misfortunes which beset it during the infancy of Francis the Second and Charles the Ninth, and to maintain the honour of his country under the vacillating rule of their mother, Catherine de Medici, and the ruthless ambition of the Guises. If he did not succeed, it was only because he could not command success; but at least he deserved it. Francis the Second, the first husband of Mary Stuart, died in the year of De l'Hôpital's elevation, and on the eve of the Assembly of Fontainebleau, where the Chancellor had convened the States-General. Listen to the firm and dignified manner in which he justified this attempted restoration of Parliamentary government in France, after his opponents had sought to make the death of the young king a pretext for setting aside the congress.

"The people have the privilege of approaching the person of their king, of making their complaints to him, of bringing to him their requests and obtaining needful remedies and provisions. . . . I say that there is no act so worthy of a king, and so

[1] Villemain, *Vie de l'Hôpital.*

becoming to him, as to hold parliaments, to give general audience to his subjects and do justice to all. Kings were chosen in the first instance to do justice, and to make war is not so royal an act as to do justice; for tyrants and bad men make war as much as kings, and often enough the bad one makes it better than the good one. Thus upon the seal of France the figure of the king is not impressed in armour, and upon horseback, but sitting on his royal throne, dispensing justice. . . . How many acts of pillage, outrage, violence, injustice, committed upon the people, are concealed from kings, which, when they hold their parliaments, they can hear and comprehend! These restrain kings from overburdening and weighing upon their people, from imposing new subsidies, from causing great and extraordinary expenditure, from selling office to unjust judges, from granting bishoprics and abbeys to unworthy men, and from endless other evils which, often through error, they commit; for the majority of kings see only through the eyes of others, and, instead of leading others, allow themselves to be led by them. . . . That which we praise in a family should be thought good in a kingdom; for there is nothing which so greatly pleases and satisfies the subject as to be known by and to be able to approach his prince. If the king could see all his people frequently and without difficulty, he would do well to see them and know them. It is probable that those who hold a contrary opinion speak more for themselves than for the prince. These are persons, it may be, who would rule and manage everything by themselves, according to their will and pleasure; who dread lest their acts should be known by others, besieging the king, and taking care that no man shall approach him." [1]

[1] *Œuvres Complètes*, i. p. 379, *et passim*. "Le peuple a ce bonheur d'approcher de la personne de son roy, de luy faire des plaintes, luy présenter ses requestes et obtenir les remèdes et provisions nécessaires. . . . Je dis qu'il n'y a acte tant digne d'un roy, et tant propre à luy, que tenir les estats, que donner audience générale à ses subjects et faire justice à chascun. Les roys ont été esleus premièrement pour faire la justice, et n'est acte aussi royal faire la guerre que faire justice; car les tyrans et les mauvais font la guerre autant que les roys et bien souvent le mauvais la fait mieulx que le bon. Aussi, dedans le scel de France, n'est pas empreinte la figure du roy armé et à cheval, mais séant en son throsne royal, rendant et faisant la justice. . . . Combien de pauvretés, d'injures, de forces, d'injustices qui se font aux peuples, sont

This is but the exordium of a noble and impressive speech, in which the Chancellor counsels, persuades, or reproaches each party in turn, and in which he is not afraid to impress upon the fanatical religious combatants of the day, by whom France was being torn in pieces, counsels of moderation and tolerance. "Away," he cries, "with those devilish words, names of parties, factions, and seditions—Lutherans, Huguenots, Papists: let us not barter away the name of Christian."

We will come back to De l'Hôpital by and by; let us in the meanwhile turn aside to Pierre la Ramée,[1] or, as he preferred to latinise his name, Ramus. It was beneath the strokes of his trenchant blade, in particular, that the mouldering scholastic philosophy crumbled into ruins. His predecessors had done much to emancipate thought and style; he lent his powerful aid to enfranchise reason. His classical studies had done for him what he set himself to do for his generation. He was professor of eloquence and philosophy, and during his whole life, a martyr to his attempts at reformation. He wished to do in the scientific world what Luther and Calvin had done in the religious. He saw clearly all the faults and subtleties of Scholasticism, dared to attack Aristotle, to whom he opposed Plato and Socrates, and, above all, reason;

cachées aux roys, qu'ils peuvent ouyr et entendre tenant les estats! Cela retire les roys de trop charger et grever leur peuple, d'imposer nouveaux subsides, de faire grandes et extraordinaires despenses, de vendre offices à mauvais juges, de bailler eveschez et abbayes à genz indignes et d'autres infinis maulx, que souvent, par erreur, ils commettent; car la pluspart des roys ne veoyent que par les yeulx d'aultruy, et au lieu qu'ils deussent mener les autres, se laissent mener. . . . Ce qui est loué en une famille doit estre trouvé bon en un royaume, car il n'y a rien qui tant plaise et contente le subject qu'estre cogneu et de pouvoir approcher de son prince. Si le roy pouvoit veoir tout son peuple souvent et sans son incommodité, ferait très-bien de le veoir et cognoistre. Il est vraysemblable que ceulx qui tiennent l'opinion contraire parlent plus pour eulx que pour le prince. Ce sont genz peut-être qui veulent seuls gouverner et conduire tout à leur vouloir et plaisir; qui craignent leurs faicts estre cogneus par aultres, assiégent le prince et gardent que nul approche de luy."

[1] 1515-1572. See M. Waddington's *Ramus, sa vie, ses écrits et ses opinions.*

and "bore without difficulty and even joyfully the storms of life, because he saw before him a more peaceful future; and under the influence of a more humane philosophy, men who had become better, more civilised, and more enlightened." He wrote a great many works, which were all eagerly read in his time, became a reformer of spelling, was considered not alone one of the best classical scholars, but also the first mathematician of his time. He even founded a chair of mathematics at the *Collége Royal*, was one of the first adherents of the system of Copernicus, became a Protestant, and was finally murdered on St. Bartholomew's night.

Jacques Amyot[1] followed the steps of Ramus, and translated Plutarch. Under his hands the stilted yet philosophic style of the great historian assumed a modern form, at once graceful, philosophic, and effective. Montaigne aptly enough expresses the value of the boon which Amyot conferred upon his age. "We ignorant folk," he says, "were lost, if this book had not lifted us from the mire; thanks to it, we dare at this moment both speak and write; its ladies teach our schoolmasters; it is our breviary."

Bodin[2] was amongst the most philosophical of those classical magistrates whose strength was rather in language than in philosophy. His own principal work, *Six Livres de la République*, belonged to that class, sufficiently numerous in every literature, which deals with the theory of government. Inspired by Plato, having, no doubt, the works of Aristotle continually before his eyes, he attempted to deduce from history and contemporary statecraft the ideal form of the state. He had doubtlessly read Machiavelli; and his illustrations are drawn from Italy as well as from France; from his own days as well as from the ancient annals of Greece and Rome. But he had what Machiavelli had not: a perception of the philosophy of history. He takes for his guide in his defini-

[1] 1530-1594. [2] 1530-1596.

tion of the laws of government, not simply the character of those who are to be governed, but the experience of rulers and subjects. His works are full of proofs of his penetration, judgment, and philosophical breadth; full also of evidence that the world's new philosophy was yet in its infancy. We find him in one place discussing the effect of climate upon the laws of nations; in another place gravely considering the weight to be attached to dreams and astral influences; and even in his *Démonomanie,* which treats about sorcerers, hinting that, like Socrates, he had a familiar demon, who pulled his right ear when he committed a good action, and his left when the contrary took place.

A clear proof that the age has not yet left its leading strings; though it may well be doubted if any age ever completely frees itself from superstitious trammels.

CHAPTER IV.

§ 1. The Reformation.

Possibly the most significant outcome of the Renaissance, and certainly the most powerful development of the intellectual revolution which distinguishes the sixteenth century, was the reformation of religion. The characteristic of the age was rebellion—rebellion of the spirit of man against the forms and grooves in which it had been endeavoured to cramp it—rebellion of the intellect against the formulas of tradition and the authority of mere didactic knowledge—rebellion of the soul against the conventional teachings and interpretations of a church distinguished more by tyranny and persecution than by intelligence and morality. The leaven of this latter revolt had indeed been working for many centuries in every country of Christendom, and in none more so than in France. To go no farther back than the thirteenth century, the Albigensian heretics and their merciless punishment bore witness to the vitality of independent religious belief within the pale of the Catholic Church. Over and over again the incipient rebellion displayed itself, only to be stamped out by the orthodox cruelty of God's vice-regent and his faithful tributaries. The followers of Valdo at Lyons, who had escaped the full fury of the Albigensian crusade, handed down their cherished freedom of faith from generation to generation; so that Luther was not without reason in tracing through this little community "the apostolic descent of a purer Christian faith." Rome had strangely overlooked the peril which per-

petually threatened her from this quiet corner of France; and it was not until 1540 that the Parliament of Aix turned its attention towards the ill-fated Waldenses. Nineteen of the most outspoken and influential were arraigned and condemned. Their property was confiscated, their houses destroyed, their bodies burned. The rest found protectors in Dubellay, Governor of Piedmont, and Sadolet, Bishop of Carpentras; Switzerland and several of the German States also interceded for them, and Francis the First for the moment stayed the persecution. But five years later, when the King was sick and senile, and had resigned himself to the guidance of his priests and his mistress, he listened to the false accusations which were brought against the peaceable mountaineers, and sanctioned the execution of a former sentence. A word sufficed. A ready instrument was found in the Baron de la Garde, who was despatched with some seven or eight thousand men to Mérindol, Cabrières, and the thirty villages in which the heretics had their homes. The resistance was slight or ineffectual, and according to de Thou, a contemporary historian, the whole district was laid waste.[1] Three thousand people were massacred in Cabrières, as many more were burnt or otherwise put to death, and the miserable remnant perished in the woods and mountains where they had sought refuge from their ruthless fellow-Christians. It is a sign of the times, important for the student of literature as well as of history, that the Catholic world received this massacre in the light of a holy judgment. It is true that Francis revolted against the cruelty committed in his name, and enjoined his son, Henry the Second, to inquire into the conduct of those who had so far exceeded his commands. The Parliament of Paris held no less than fifty

[1] 1545. The circumstances inspired Milton with one of the grandest of his sonnets, beginning thus:—

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold."

meetings before it could come to a decision one way or another—a fact which attests both the obstinate courage of the champions of justice and freedom, and the extreme authority of the orthodox Catholic party. The advocate-general Guérin, who had apparently tampered with the King's decree, was condemned to death; but the President d'Oppède, and his fellow-murderers, who could hardly have been less guilty, were acquitted of blame.[1]

Can we need a more significant picture of the time?—a time in which the passions of men, excited to the last degree, found a sanction for the most terrible crimes in the religion of the gospel of love—a time in which the whole of western Europe was either plunged in religious civil war, or at least hesitating on the threshold—a time when kings balanced and alternated between the cause of religious liberty and the cause of Papal supremacy; when Germany, the scene of religious conflict, became finally the first powerful champion and bulwark of the Reformation, and when France, after no less constant and desperate struggles, ended by appearing as the champion of the Holy See. It was an age in which the Church of Rome needed all the energy and all the ability of her supporters, and that not only on the field of battle, but in the cloister, in the pulpit, and on the hearth. It has been the glory and the salvation of the Papal authority that it has never stood long in need of resolute and efficient defenders, and that in the darkest hours of its fortune it has ever found deliverance by its own vitality. In the year 1540—the year in which the first condemnation of the Waldenses marked the inauguration of a more intensely militant attitude in the French Catholics—was founded the Society of Jesus; just as, three centuries before, in the midst of the Albigensian crusade, was established the hardly more formidable engine of the Inquisition.

[1] 1550, five years after the commission of the crime.

With the death of Henry the Second of France,[1] who had favoured the Protestants of Germany, at the same time that he rendered assistance to the Popes against Catholic Spain and England, the era of foreign religious war gave place to a sanguinary era of civil war between the parties of the Church and of the Huguenots. Henry had but gratified his dynastic ambition in encouraging the Lutherans against Charles the Fifth of Germany; but in his own country he had shown no great tenderness to the Reformers. He hated the Calvinists, as Tavannes points out,[2] more on grounds of statecraft than of religion, fearing lest they should receive foreign aid against himself, as the Lutheran princes had received it against the Emperor. In 1557 he sanctioned the introduction of the Inquisition—"the only ram," said Pope Paul IV., "with which heresy can be beaten down." It was too late, however, to do throughout France what had so easily been effected in Provence. One half of the nobility, one tenth of the people, and a considerable party amongst the clergy, were secretly attached to the principles of the Reformation.[3] The indecision of Francis the First and Henry the Second had endured too long, and had given too free scope to reason and satire. During the later years of Henry's reign, the progress of the Huguenots had been extremely rapid. In 1555 there was not a single public place of worship in France. When the king died there were at least two thousand. At this time the opinions of Calvin were openly professed by such notable men as the two Bourbon princes,—Antoine de Vendôme,[4] who through his marriage with Jeanne d'Albret, had become King of Navarre and Prince of Béarn, and Louis, Prince of Condé,[5]—and by the three nephews of Montmorency, the Admiral de Coligny,[6] his elder brother the Cardinal de Châtillon,[7]

[1] 1559. [2] *Mémoires de Jean de Saulx de Tavannes*, ch. xx.
[3] Lavallée, *Histoire des Français*, vol. ii. sect. 5, ch. i. [4] 1518-1562.
[5] 1530-1569. Between the two came Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon (1520-1590), who adhered to the ancient faith. [6] 1517-1572. [7] 1515-1571.

and his younger brother François.[1] Even the Parliaments, as we have seen, inclined from time to time to the Reformed party, and religious liberty, if not religious revolt, found its apologists amongst the most famous magistrates of the country, in the persons of de l'Hôpital, Dumoulin, and men of like influence and courage.

Francis the Second was barely sixteen when he ascended the throne in 1559. The reins of government were immediately seized by the Duke de Guise[2] and the Cardinal de Lorraine,[3] grandsons of René II. of Lorraine, and consequently the uncles of Mary Stuart, who had been espoused to Francis during the lifetime of his father. These, with the sanction of the queen-mother, Catherine de Medici, dismissed the great officers of state who were known to lean towards the Reformed opinions, and rigorously enforced the late king's edicts against the heretics. Only one thing more was needed to exasperate to the last degree the hostility of the two great parties into which France was now divided. A flood of violent pamphlets was poured over the whole country, some few of which bore the names of the writers, whilst the majority were anonymous. All harped upon the minority of the king. One or two merely demanded that the government should be entrusted to the princes of the blood, or that the States-General should be assembled; and de l'Hôpital, as has been seen, presently attempted to apply this natural remedy to the evils under which the kingdom laboured. Others frankly condemned the ambition of the Guises, and even went so far as to demand their death. The foreign extraction of the Duke and the Cardinal[4] assisted in aggravating the discontent excited by their harsh exercise of the royal prerogatives. In March 1560 a considerable force of insurgents marched against Paris; they were routed, and all taken with

[1] 1521-1569. [2] 1519-1563. [3] 1524-1754.

[4] Their father, Claude, was born in Lorraine.

arms in their hands were treated without mercy. "For several days, without trial, and under the eyes of the king, the prisoners were hung, drowned, beheaded; the blood ran in a stream along the streets; the Loire was covered with corpses. The executions only ceased at the prayer of the queen-mother, who delivered and set free a large number of conspirators."[1] Condé and Coligny, who had been amongst the secret fomenters of the outbreak, stoutly denied complicity in it, but they lost no time in withdrawing from the court. In the meantime, Catherine de Medici had grown continually more cool and distrustful towards the Duke and his brother. It was her influence which preserved Condé from the scaffold in the last few days of her eldest son's life;[2] and when to the latter succeeded his younger brother Charles IX.—a boy of ten years of age—she summoned back to court the leaders of the liberal party, and ostensibly took the Huguenots under her protection.

If there was one man in France who, by his moderation, his good sense, his superiority to the passions of his time, could have allayed those passions and found a peaceful issue from the crisis, it was de l'Hôpital, whom Catherine now made her chancellor and confidential minister. The States-General discussed the affairs of the country with comparative calmness, and did not separate without guaranteeing the free exercise of the Reformed religion in France. In the same year (1561) a national council was summoned at Poissy. This council, from which Catherine and de l'Hôpital expected such grand results, was attended by the whole court, by numerous advocates of the Reformed faith, including Théodore de Beza, the friend and disciple of Calvin, by the Cardinal de Lorraine, and by many orthodox bishops. Catherine had previously written to ask from the Pope the suppression of images, communion in two kinds, prayers in the vulgar

[1] *Mémoires de Michel de Castelnau*, bk. i. ch. 8. [2] 1560.

tongue, with other concessions, alleging in her letter[1] that "it is impossible to bring back, either by arms or by laws, those who have separated from the Roman Church, so great is their number, so powerful are they by reason of the nobles and magistrates who have embraced their cause, so well is it united, and so much strength does it acquire day by day." The Pope was shocked by such a petition, and sent his legate to attend the council. Moderation marked the conference at its outset, but it was only too manifest how little hope there could be in such an expedient. It was not long before Beza scandalised the Romanists by saying that "Christ, in the eucharist, was as far from the bread and wine as heaven from earth." The bishops cried blasphemy on the heretical opinion; and Lainé, general of the Jesuits, who had accompanied the legate from Rome, protested against the council as being held without the sanction of the Pope. To end the violent disputes which thereafter arose, the conference was dissolved. But the Catholic party was now thoroughly alarmed; reconciliation was completely out of the question, and in March 1562 the civil war began. The whole of France was in arms, and the literary annals of the remainder of the century will sufficiently attest its violence and its importance

§ 2. Calvin and his Friends.

Throughout the earlier stages of the religious struggle going on in France at that time, Calvin,[2] from his retirement at Geneva, had exercised a powerful personal influence, exciting the people by his writings, by his frequent letters, by his emissaries, by an organisation, in short, which—all due allowance being made for the difference of the epochs and of the causes—might give grounds for an apt parallel between

[1] De Thou, *Historiarum sui temporis*, lib. xxviii. [2] 1509-1564.

himself and Mazzini. Both these men were firebrands by disposition and inclination; both fought for a cause which they considered the highest and noblest of all possible causes —the one for religious and the other for civil liberty; both were constrained to work in exile; both subordinated means to ends; both went to the length of calling in the sword to redress the balance of popular freedom. In both, zeal outran discretion. Mazzini did not die, like Calvin, in exile; but if Calvin had found his Garibaldi, he might perhaps have died in his native Noyon a happier and a more contented man than the arch-conspirator of the Italian Revolution.

Rabelais called his contemporary "le démoniaque de Gèneve;" and there was, indeed, little in common between the Democritus and the Mazzini of the sixteenth century. In the quality of satire they were both true sons of Gaul; but how different even in their one point of resemblance. Calvin was cold, morose, stern, implacable, and used his power of raillery with the same ruthless and unrelenting animosity with which he employed every other weapon wherewith he could injure his foes. Satire without a smile is perhaps the nearest approach to outward feeling which we find recorded of the hypochondriac reformer of Geneva. The son of a procureur-fiscal, he was destined for the church; was at twelve years a chaplain; was one of the best classical scholars then known, and even not unacquainted with Hebrew. He went to study law, and became a disciple of Alciati. He retained to the last all the shrewdness, the logical rigour, the contemptuous obstinacy and self-reliance of an unimpassioned lawyer. His creed once fashioned and shaped, his party chosen or created, there was for him no possibility of a rival, a distraction, a doubt, a hesitation. When poor, he sold his books, and wrote instead of reading; when banished, he wrote on still, and moved his country more deeply from exile than at home; when sick, nervous, rheumatic, he clung to his pen,

and covered thousands of folios—so intense was his need to communicate himself to his generation and to posterity. His sermons amount to two thousand. If his letters had been collected, as we are wont to collect the letters of our dead, they would have filled scores of bulky volumes. Francis the First, Henry the Second, Edward the Sixth of England, Antony of Navarre, Marguerite de Valois, the Duchess of Ferrara, Coligny, Condé, Luther, Melanchthon, Beza, Cranmer, John Knox; these are but a handful amongst the recipients of his exhortations, expostulations, and encouragements. His burning zeal knew no solace except in the effort to make his belief the belief of the whole world; his interpretation of Christianity the rule and guide of the Christian Church. No wonder that such a life as this was a short one. He did not long survive the outbreak of the religious civil war in France, dying at the age of fifty-five in his exile at Geneva.

This Pope of the Reformation, supreme and infallible by his own conviction and the assent of his disciples, who borrowed Rome's method for propagating his creed, even to the extent of procuring the death of a brother-reformer, Servetus, at the stake, had little charity to spare for those who refused to accept his own opinions. His faith was cruel and uncompromising, and he virtually pronounced his own infallibility as a dogma, in the hope that all the world might be compelled to accept that faith as its own. He believed in a God fashioned in Calvin's image, who condemned—who had predestined to condemnation—such as would not recognise the justice of his decrees, even though these decrees had created evil, had prepared a hell, had closed heaven upon an infinite number of eternal souls ages before they had come into existence. He took the half-realised conceptions of the mild Augustine, and shaped them into stern and uncompromising dogmas—not satisfied with his new version of the Gospel until he had demonstrated that the good man is in duty bound

to hate the reprobate, "in order to conform himself to the will of the God who condemned them." Such was the apotheosis of religious hatred preached to mankind in the dawn of its new life by a perversely enlightened and conspicuously logical Frenchman. Such was the teaching of the eloquent and persuasive exile of Geneva, as set forth with all the terseness and clearness of a scientific treatise in the *Institution Chrétienne*, written when its author was barely twenty-six, with all the ardent intemperance of youth—insisted on to the end of his life with all the obstinate tenacity and persistence of age.

This *Christian Institution*, or instruction, is dedicated to Francis the First, whose attention is frankly invited to "a kind of summary of the very doctrine which many think ought to be punished with prison, banishment, and proscription." The banishment and proscription thus distinctly invited were, in fact, the lot of the writer; but, if he had expected his fate, he was not the man to shrink from it. He fully felt what he subsequently expressed in one of his letters: "I am assured, in the first place, that God has me in His holy keeping; and, in the second place, that, if it please Him that we should suffer, I would gladly die for him." Meanwhile he lived; and if, in the warfare which he had undertaken, it fell to his lot to decree the time and cause for others to die, he could do this with an equally confident assurance that he did it in the service and in the name of God.

This same dedication is worthy of perusal, and suffices better than any other part of the work to display the man as he actually lived and wrote.[1] His book, he says, is intended to serve for the instruction of those whom he designed to teach, and also as a confession of his faith before the king.

[1] At the same time it is in the letters of Calvin that we must naturally look for the most satisfactory picture of his mind, for his endless activity and zeal, and for his bitter vein of satire.

"It is for you, sire, not to turn away your ears or your resolution from so just a defence, especially when so great a matter is in question—namely, how the glory of God shall be maintained on the earth, how his truth shall preserve its honour and dignity, how the kingdom of Christ shall endure in its entirety. A question truly worthy of your ears, of your authority, of your royal throne! For this thought constitutes a true king, if he recognise that he is the very minister of God in the government of his kingdom; and on the other hand he who does not rule with the view to subserve the glory of God exercises no rule, but a brigandage. For it is a self-deceit to expect a long prosperity in a kingdom which is not governed by the sceptre of God; that is of his Holy Word. . . . Nor ought you to be diverted by contempt for our littleness. Of a verity we acknowledge freely enough that we are poor and meet for contempt; that is to say, before God miserable sinners, before man despised and made low; and even (if you will), the filth and offscouring of the world, or whatever more vile can yet be named. So that there remains for us nothing wherewith to glorify ourselves before God, except his pity alone, by the which, without any merit, we are saved: nor before man, except our weakness, to wit, that which all consider a great cause of shame. . . . Our doctrine is not our own but that of the living God and of his Christ, whom the Father has made king, to rule from one sea to the other, and from the rivers to the ends of the world; and so to rule that, by smiting the world with the very tip of his mouth, he breaks it with his glory and power like a potter's vessel."[1]

[1] "C'est vostre office, sire, de ne destourner ne vos oreilles, ne vostre courage d'une si juste défense, principalement quand il est question de si grande chose: c'est assavoir comment la gloire de Dieu sera maintenue sur terre: comment sa vérité retiendra son honneur et dignité; comment le règne de Christ demeurera en son entier. O matière digne de vos oreilles, digne de vostre juridiction, digne de vostre throne royal! Car ceste pensée faict un vray roy, s'il se recognoist estre vray ministre de Dieu au gouvernement de son royaume: et au contraire celui qui ne règne point à ceste fin de servir à la gloire de Dieu, n'exerce pas règne, mais brigandage. Or on s'abuse si on attend longue prospérité en un règne qui n'est point gouverné du sceptre de Dieu, c'est-à-dire sa sainte parole. . . Et ne devez estre destourné par le contemnement de nostre petitesse. Certes nous recoignoissons assez combien nous sommes pauvres gens et de mépris: c'est assavoir, devant Dieu, misé-

Here was the dignity of faith asserting and magnifying itself before the dignity of royalty; an assertion couched in terms of almost abject humility, and yet flaming with the covert satire of a literary giant. Here, too, was a force and concision of language never before heard in France; a style vigorous by its very simplicity and sobriety, which was the genuine outcome of the Renaissance, owing the least part of its strength to the classical models, and yet in itself classical and a model to all who came after. The influence of Calvin's writings upon the style of his successors, and upon the literary development of his country, cannot easily be overestimated. With him French prose may be said to have attained its manhood; the best of his contemporaries, and of those who had preceded him, did but use as a staff or as a toy that which he employed as a burning sword. Such indeed was the device on the title-page of the first edition of his *Institution;* and it was in every way appropriate to its character and to his own. The force and the fire were the measure of the man; his language was vehement because he was vehement, and its power was but the expression of his own powerful intellect. Calvin speaks as he writes; and to read his words was for his contemporaries the same thing as to listen to him. The lofty and serious prose of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bears his mark visibly impressed upon it; and not only upon its style but upon its method

rables pécheurs, envers les hommes, vilipendez et déjettez; et mesmes (si vous voulez) l'ordure et ballieure du monde, ou si on peut encore nommer quelque chose de plus vile. Tellement qu'il ne nous reste rien de quoy nous glorifier devant Dieu, sinon sa seule miséricorde, par laquelle, sans quelque mérite, nous sommes sauvés: ny envers les hommes, sinon nostre infirmité, c'est-à-dire ce que tous estiment grande ignominie . . . Nostre doctrine n'est pas nostre, mais de Dieu vivant et de son Christ, lequel le Père a constitué roy, pour dominer d'une mer à l'autre et depuis les fleuves jusques aux fins de la terre; et tellement dominer qu'en frappant la terre de la seule verge de sa bouche, il la casse toute avec sa gloire et sa force comme un pot de terre."

and argument. For the *Christian Institution* was the first French work of importance which prominently displayed the severe logical reasoning, well sustained and clearly enunciated, which has ever since distinguished the national French literature. What Villehardouin and Joinville did for history, Calvin did for theology; and more, for he not only showed his countrymen how to treat the most elevated of all themes, but he gave them at the outset a masterpiece and a model.

Calvin was, from his youth upwards, in bad health, and his portrait shows a fleshless countenance, a peaked beard, and a gloomy though determined aspect. To show that he had definitely broken with the Roman Catholic Church, he married, in the year 1540, Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist whom he had converted. She died, after having been married nine years, and on her deathbed Calvin reminded her of her children by her first husband. "I have already recommended them to the Lord," she replied. "And also to me?" said he. "I know," was her dying answer, "that you will not abandon children who are recommended to the Lord." These trusting words of his wife characterise the man to whom they were addressed. Theodore de Beza, in describing Calvin's own deathbed, says that his want of breath prevented his speaking, so that his prayers were rather sighs than intelligible words, but "accompanied by such a look and in a manner so composed, that his glance alone showed by what faith and hope he was strengthened."[1]

Theodore de Beza,[2] who has already been mentioned as a friend and disciple of Calvin, was ten years his junior. His earliest work was a volume of Latin poetry, *Juvenilia*, distinguished rather by delicacy than by morality. He appears to have been one of those who were won over by the eloquence

[1] Calvin's complete works were published at Geneva in twelve enormous folio volumes, and were reprinted in 1617. They have been translated and published in English by the Calvin Society.

[2] 1519-1605.

of his master not only from the vanities of the world but from the ranks of the Romanists. Settling in Geneva, he was soon recognised as Calvin's most worthy and trustworthy lieutenant; and, subsequently, as his natural successor in the leadership of the French Reformation. He was for some time a professor of Greek at Lausanne, and to the last he maintained the elegance and classical spirit of his earlier writings. Witness the generous tribute which he paid to his dead master. "On that day the sun went to sleep, and the greatest light in this world for the service of the Church of God was drawn back into heaven. On the next night and the following day," he adds, "there was great weeping throughout the town; for the prophet of the Lord was no more." Beza produced many controversial works, and assisted in a Latin translation of the Bible, which was used by the Protestants in place of the Vulgate. In his polemical writings he closely approximated to the vehemence, not to say the violence, of Calvin. After presiding at the Synod of Rochelle, at which a union was effected amongst the several Reformed churches, he died at the age of eighty-six, early in the seventeenth century. He was the historian of the Reformation in France, having left behind him a *Histoire Ecclésiastique des Eglises Réformées au Royaume de France.*

Beza was more than the champion of the Calvinists, he was also a reformer in literature, and one of those who contributed greatly to the classical Renaissance. Yet he knew where to stop. He recommended the classics as models to study, but said at the same time that one ought not to imitate those authors who, "thinking to enrich our language, deck it out in the Greek and Roman fashion." Purely classical in his own style, he used his talents chiefly to spread the religious principles in which he believed. He wrote, amongst other works, a religious tragedy, *Le Sacrifice d'Abraham*, after the Greek models, which remains as a

proof of his correct classical taste. It is somewhat in the style of Milton's *Samson Agonistes.* We give a few lines from the monologue of Abraham, on the point of killing his son—

"Let another be the slayer of my son!
Alas! Lord, must this hand
Deal this too cruel blow?
Alas! what shall I say to the mourning mother
If she hears of this violent death?"[1]

Let us give one example of De Beza's love for his fatherland — that land which he was forbidden to enter — by quoting the following lines, so full of feeling and resignation, which he wrote whilst at Geneva.

"O God! if you wish,
I know that you can
Take me from here;
But if, for the present,
You wish me to remain,
I wish it also.
Farewell, France, farewell,
Which is the spot
Where first
I came into the world,
And which first heard
My feeble wail.
O my darling country,
I die far from you.
And that willingly,
Because within you, O France!
Have taken up their abode
The murderers of the saints.

[1] Qu'un autre soit de mon fils meurtrier!
Hélas! Seigneur, faut-il que cette main
Vienne à donner ce coup trop inhumain?
Las! que diray-je à la mère dolente,
Si elle entend cette mort violente?

Farewell, united hearts
Of the poor banished,
Who alone in these times,
In spite of all envy,
Pass your life
Happy and satisfied."[1]

Farel[2] and Viret[3] have also to be classed among the literary reformers; but whatever may have been their influence in the field of theology, they made no mark in that of literature. We leave them to that oblivion to which they are condemned by posterity.

[1] "O Dieu, si tu veux,
Je sais que tu peux
Me tirer d'ici;
Mais si pour cette heure
Veux que je demeure,
Je le veux aussi.
Adieu, France, adieu,
Qui êtes le lieu
Qui, premièrement,
Au monde me vîtes,
Et premier ouîtes
Mon gémissement.
O mon pays doux!
Je meurs loin de vous,
Voire et volontiers,
Puis qu'en vous, ô France!
Font leur demeurance
Des saints les meurtriers.
Adieu, cœurs unis
Des pauvres bannis,
Qui, seuls en ce temps,
Malgré toute envie
Passez votre vie
Heureux et contents!"

[2] 1489-1565.

[3] 1511-1571.

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